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Indo-European Afterlives

Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Life beyond Death

Jenny H. Larsson, Thomas Olander & Anders Richardt Jørgensen (eds.)

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Edited by
Jenny H. Larsson, Thomas Olander
& Anders Richardt Jørgensen

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1. Exploring the afterlife in Indo-European traditions

Jenny H. Larsson
Stockholm University

Abstract

This chapter showcases the interdisciplinary work in the volume, work characterized by the use of data from various sources – archaeological as well as textual – in order to address both mythological concepts of the afterlife and ritual activities involving mourning and handling of the diseased.

1. Death and afterlife across Indo-European cultures

Rituals and mythological concepts related to the afterlife are a consistent theme in ancient Indo-European cultures. Descriptions of funerary practices and ideas about the afterlife are found in numerous texts from various early Indo-European communities. The exploration of the myths and religious imagery of early Indo-European traditions holds significant promise for future progress. The advancement is contingent upon a meticulous focus on textual sources, undertaking a linguistic reconstruction of names, epithets, poetic formulae and phraseology. By examining these elements within the framework of Indo-European comparative linguistics, and applying the established sound laws, we can to a large extent rule out parallels due to coincidences or borrowings between languages. This methodological approach is a central part of this volume.

At the same time, the archaeological record is often particularly informative when it comes to the handling of the dead. Although different in nature, both types of data provide valuable insights into the beliefs and concepts about the afterlife in ancient societies. In order to improve our understanding of these issues, we need to utilize methodologies

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from different fields, such as archaeology, comparative mythology and historical linguistics.

2. Indo-European poetic motifs and mythological concepts surrounding the afterlife

A significant portion of this volume is dedicated to an in-depth exploration of Indo-European poetic motifs and mythological concepts related to the afterlife.

Peter Jackson Rova, in his contribution, emphasizes the oral and aural nature of early Indo-European poetic traditions. Ancient Indo-European poets utilized language and poetry not only as artistic expressions but also as vehicles for social and eschatological transformation and to shape perceptions of the afterlife. By examining passages from Greek, Iranian, Vedic and to some extent Germanic traditions, Jackson Rova argues that the ancient poets envisioned poetry as a means of creating spaces that transcend ordinary existence and place the subject within the realm of imperishable fame and divine dwelling.

Building on the proposals by Jackson Rova in the preceding chapter, **Martin Schwartz** examines the intricate poetic and symbolic structure of the Gathic texts. Focusing on Yasna 45.3 as a key example, he explores phonic mystagogy, audiovisuality and the symbolic use of initial sounds in Zoroastrian sacred poetry. The chapter suggests that these texts were crafted to be both heard and visually envisioned by their audience, highlighting the interplay of sound and structure in conveying spiritual messages.

In the next chapter, **Laura Massetti** explores intriguing parallels between the Greek figure *Orpheus* and the Vedic *Ṛbhus*. Building on her previous work (Massetti 2017), she presents comprehensive phraseological data supporting the etymological connection between the two names, both derived from the common PIE root *$*h_3erb^h$*- 'to turn, change sides, join'. Massetti situates these figures within the Indo-European poetic tradition, by highlighting their shared capacity to use poetry and ritual to bridge the mortal and divine realms. This chapter thus contributes to a deeper understanding of the "eschatology of glory-through-poetry" and how ancient poets envisioned and articulated the afterlife through their craft.

Jan Bremmer further explores the Indo-European motifs in Greek conceptions of the underworld. He points to a continuous poetic tradition, where the inherited Indo-European mythological material has,

to some extent, been adapted to the changing ecological conditions in Greece, and where the notion of the afterlife appears to have been transformed, perhaps influenced by Mesopotamian beliefs, to envision an underworld located beneath the earth.

In the chapter about the god of the night sky as a guide to the afterlife, **Michael Janda** explores the significance of the god Dionysus in relation to Indo-European mythology and the constellations, particularly Orion. Janda also explores the idea of Dionysus as a psychopomp, a role that is supported by traditions associating Orion with guiding souls in the afterlife. The chapter posits that the constellation Orion influenced a variety of myths and religious beliefs, including those involving Dionysus.

Riccardo Ginevra proposes a new reconstruction of the development of the Old Norse Valkyries from female death-demons of likely Mediterranean origin to heavenly maidens in love with mortal heroes. The chapter proposes that their name originally meant 'slain-taster' and was later reanalysed as 'slain-chooser' after the technical formula of "own-choice" marriages in Germanic and Indo-European ("to choose a man [as husband]"), making the Valkyries a Norse counterpart to Indic and Greek "Heavenly Maidens" (who often choose their own husbands in myth) and shedding light on how conceptualizations of the afterlife may mirror actual customs and social institutions.

Together, these chapters offer different perspectives on the eschatological themes and figures that permeate Indo-European mythology associated with the afterlife. By integrating linguistic, mythological and poetic evidence, they provide a deeper understanding of how ancient Indo-European societies conceptualized the afterlife and the transition from life to death.

3. Funerary practices and ritual mourning

Another prominent theme of the book is the exploration of rituals and funerary practices performed by different Indo-European speaking communities. Here the intersection between textual evidence and archaeological findings occupies a central position.

Birgit Anette Olsen examines Indo-European concepts of the afterlife, focusing on the notion that the deceased are in some way bound to the underworld. Olsen discusses three Proto-Indo-European roots related to tying, binding, and covering, **sh₂aḭ-* 'tie, bind (also magically)', **deh₁-* 'bind' and **u̯elhu̯-* 'wrap, cover'. This suggests a common Indo-European view of the afterlife where the deceased are both

physically and metaphorically tied to the underworld. Through a detailed linguistic analysis, supported by mythological and archaeological evidence, Olsen demonstrates how language and myth intertwine to shape Indo-European conceptualizations of the underworld and the fate of the deceased.

The contribution by **Anders Kaliff** and **Terje Oestigaard** also focuses on the funerary practices of the early Indo-Europeans. They examine the Bronze Age Håga grave mound, located outside Uppsala, Sweden, noted for its remains of intricate cremation rites. In the chapter, they argue that cremation in Scandinavia from the Bronze Age onwards is closely tied to Indo-European traditions and that it is significantly linked to advances in metallurgy, the handling of high temperatures, and the frequent use of fire in various rituals. These rituals included not only funerary practices but also agricultural and seasonal rites, highlighting the multifaceted significance of fire in Indo-European cultural and religious contexts.

In the final chapter, **Anders Richardt Jørgensen** analyses the two roots *$\hat{k}eh_2d$- 'to fall' and *$\hat{k}eh_2d$- 'to mourn; to be emotionally distraught'. He suggests that the original meaning of the root 'to fall', was metonymically extended to apply specifically to 'falling down as the result of strong emotional distress', a cross-culturally very common ritualized behaviour found in relation to the death of a relative. Accordingly, it is suggested that this behaviour may have been characteristic of ritualized mourning among the early speakers of Indo-European.

4. Conclusion and a way forward

The present volume is intended as a step towards creating an interdisciplinary interface that allows drawing conclusions from different types of data and methodologies. The interdisciplinary approach allows for a richer, more nuanced exploration of the complex interplay between language, ritual and belief systems and enables us to examine how Indo-European peoples sought to understand and ritualize the mysteries of the afterlife.

Looking ahead, we hope that this volume will also set the stage for future research. By highlighting the intersection between textual evidence and archaeological findings and by including contributions from various disciplines, we hope to encourage further interdisciplinary collaboration of this kind in order to enrich our understanding of human cultural heritage across time and space.

Reference

Massetti, Laura. 2017. Gr. Ὀρφεύς, ved. *Ṛ̊bhú-* und heth. *ḫarp(p)-^{mi}*. In Daniel Kölligan, Ivo Hajnal & Kathrina Zipster (eds), *Miscellanea Indogermanica: Festschrift für José Luis García Ramón zum 65 Geburtstag*, 457–470. Innsbruck: Institut für Literatur und Sprachwissenschaft der Universität Innsbruck.

2. Dwellings undwindling
Towards an Indo-European poetics of perlocutionary sites

Peter Jackson Rova
Stockholm University

Abstract

In order to appreciate how ancient Indo-European poets utilized language and poetry to shape perceptions of the afterlife, it is helpful to acknowledge that the oral and aural nature of early Indo-European poetic texts served not only as artistic expressions but also as vehicles for social and eschatological transformation. Through an analysis of key examples from Greek, Iranian and Vedic traditions, the case is made that the poets envisioned poetry as a means to create so-called perlocutionary sites – spaces conjured by spoken or sung discourse that were considered to transcend ordinary existence and anchor the subject within a realm of imperishable fame and divine dwelling. While apparently once deeply rooted in Indo-European linguistic ideology, this assertion can be redefined in familiar analytical terms (drawing on J. L. Austin's speech act theory) as the power of poetry to not merely describe but to actively bring about a desired state of affairs. The final excursus extends the scope to the Germanic world by suggesting a continuous influence of this underlying poetic ideology on Old Norse skaldic poetry.

1. Preliminaries

Although speakers of archaic Indo-European languages were surely not unique in imagining the post-mortem survival of distinguished individuals, they may still have done so according to certain distantly shared cultural conventions. Given this assumption, it should be borne

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in mind that the best-preserved early descriptions of the afterlife to qualify as reliable testimony all derive from poetically crafted texts. One should also keep in mind that these poetic texts, or at least their prototypes, were once orally carried out and aurally received without being intended to form part of a comprehensive poetic canon, whether encoded in scrolls or through the mnemonic techniques of ritual specialists, but rather as unique realizations of poetic encompassment in the presence of living individuals. One senses beyond the mere technical dimension of oral poetic performance a more elaborate rhetoric dimension of transformation-through-performance.

Against this background, I would like to briefly explore an overlooked aspect of the eschatological genre that relates less to the descriptive plot than to the poetics and pragmatics of its realization. Since the earliest eschatological proposals would have been authored and performed by poets, it is to their articulated beliefs about the power of language and poetry that we may first want to turn in order to appreciate the means and ends of their eschatology.

2. Three examples

My first example should speak for itself. Pindar, in celebrating the victorious young boxer Hagesidamos in Olympian 10, concludes by assuring his addressee that Zeus' Pierian daughters (= the muses) now nurture his "far-reaching fame" (*eurý kléos* [95]), whereas a man of noble deeds should be wary of reaching the dwelling of Hades "without song" (*aoidâs áter* [91]) since he procures nought by a "little pleasure" (*brachý ti terpnón* [93]). I take this to imply that Pindar wants to direct Hagesidamos' attention not just to the fact of being subjected to praise, but to the fact of being intentionally transformed by that act, eventually receiving an otherwise unattainable post-mortem status.

> Olympian 10, 91–94:
> καὶ ὅταν καλὰ ἔρξαις ἀοιδᾶς ἄτερ,
> Ἀγησίδαμ', εἰς Ἀΐδα σταθμὸν
> ἀνὴρ ἵκηται, κενεὰ πνεύσαις ἔπορε μόχθῳ βραχύ τι τερπνόν.
> So, when a man who has performed noble deeds, Hagesidamus, goes without song to Hades' dwelling, in vain has he striven and gained for his toil but brief delight.
> (Transl. Race)

The second example is less straightforward since it reaches us in the form of a strongly biased, second-hand testimony. Adeimantus, one of

Socrates' two interlocutors in *Republic* (363c), complains about how the legendary figures of Musaeus and Eumolpus possess an excellent song through which to celebrate their admittedly righteous clients by ritually granting them the pleasure of an everlasting symposium in Hades. Plato's choice of phrasing in describing how Musaeus and his son "conduct them to the house of Hades *tôi lógōi*" is revealing here. Since the instrumental (or possibly locative) employment of the dative is apparently meant to suggest that the righteous clients are granted these pleasures *in accordance with the tale* of Musaeus and his son, those understood as *arranging* (*kataskeuásantes*) their symposium are not some unnamed hosts in the netherworld but rather the two legendary poets in whose song the symposiasts reside.[1]

The third example of which to take stock here occurs in the Vedic poet Kavaṣa Ailūṣa's lament for his former patron Kuruśravaṇa (10.33.6): "[I chose] the father of Upamaśravas for whom there were sweet songs, delightful like a dwelling place (*kṣétraṃ* [< **tk̑eį* 'to settle, dwell'] *ná*) for one at home in it." (*yásya prásvādaso gíra* | *upamáśravasaḥ pitúḥ* | *kṣétraṃ ná raṇvám ūcúṣe*) (transl. Brereton/Jamison). When Kavaṣa presents his addressee with the notion of a habitable song (*gír-* + *kṣétra*), he is also bringing into play the 'fame' (*śravas*, *śravaṇa*) encoded in the names both of his former patron and of his present addressee (and prospected future patron).

3. The Indo-European background

In order to relate such encomiastic strategies to a legacy of Indo-European linguistic ideology, it will not suffice to merely pinpoint analogous strategies in linguistically related poetic traditions. Much of what such strategies entail could of course have developed independently as the secondary result of poetic invention. A poet who excels in his trade can easily conclude that a well-crafted poem is designed not just to describe an ideal state of affairs but to actively enforce its realization by turning the poem itself into a sort of dwelling place. What we need to look for in reaching backwards, therefore, is a configuration of inherited items that seem attributable less to spontaneous invention but rather to some fixed repertoire of ideas with which these poets continuously and actively engaged long after they had ceased to self-identify as members of the same community.

[1] Paul Shorey's (1969) translation (*my emphasis*) reads: "they conduct them to the house of Hades *in their tale* and arrange a symposium of the saints."

A first step in outlining such a repertoire would be to analyse it according to the following model:

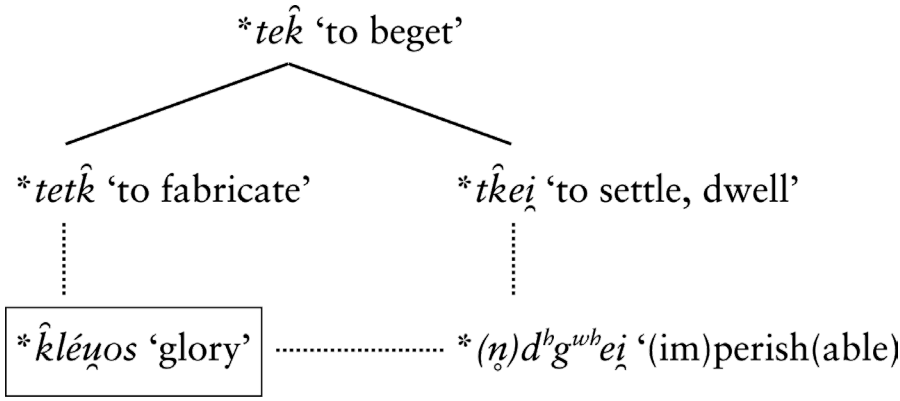

Figure 1. Conceptual model. Graphics: Peter Jackson Rova © License: CC BY-NC.

The concept of glory is highlighted in this model as the common denominator of all other items (referred to in the seminal work by Rüdiger Schmitt as the *Zentralbegriff* of IE poetics). A verb like **tetk̂* can take **k̂léu̯os* as its direct object (example 1), a deverbative noun meaning 'good dwelling' (*sukṣití-* [< PIE **tk̂eu̯i*]) can pair contrastively with that of 'good fame' (*suśravás-* [< PIE **k̂léu̯os*]) to form a merism (example 2) or be combined with the deverbative adjective **n̥dʰgʷʰito-* as in Figure 1 (example 3). Furthermore, the verb **tk̂eu̯i* can be combined with its antonym to yield a sense of contrast between creation and destruction (example 4) or combined with **dʰgʷʰeu̯i* to yield a cohesive sense of indestructible creation (= an undwindling dwelling) by negating one of the items (example 5). As a possible variant of the last example (without the verb **tk̂eu̯i* but instead with the same imperative [*dhehi*] as in the classical example 3), one should add the notion of being placed by the god in an imperishable world.

1. RV 4.36.9b.: *ihá śrávo vīrávat takṣatā naḥ* "fashion here for us the fame that heroes accompany"
2. RV 1.91.21c.: *sukṣitíṃ suśrávasaṃ* "(possessing) good dwelling (and) good fame"
3. RV 1.9.7b-c.: *asmé* […] *śrávo* […] *dhehi ákṣitam* "place in us fame imperishable" – Il. 9.413 *kléos áphthiton éstai* "[my] fame will be imperishable"

4. RV 4.17.13a.: *kṣiyántaṃ tvam ákṣiyantaṃ kṛṇoti* "he [Indra] deprives the man dwelling peacefully of his peace"
5. Lactantius, Divin. Inst. 1.5.6 quoting an Orphic source (= F152 Bernabé [2004–2005]): ἔκτισεν (κτίζω < PIE *$t\hat{k}e\underset{\cdot}{i}$) ἀθανάτοις δόμον ἄφθιτον "he [Phanes?] built for immortals an imperishable house" – RV 9.113.7c-d.: *tásmin mā́ṃ dhehi* […] *am̥ṛte loké ákṣite* "in that one place me […] in the immortal, imperishable world"

The combination of the verb √*DHĀ* with a noun + the modifier *ákṣita-* (in examples 3 and 5) is illuminating in that it suggests a contiguous relation between the transformation of the *laudandus* through the inoculation of imperishable fame, and his transportation to an equally imperishable dwelling ("place *in us* [loc.] fame imperishable" → "place me *in the imperishable world* [loc.]").

One might observe, as a mere curiosity, that a combination of the reconstructed verbs *$t\hat{k}e\underset{\cdot}{i}$ and *$d^{h}g^{wh}e\underset{\cdot}{i}$ would have created a startling case of poetic iconicity by allowing an unvoiced unaspirated dental (*t*) and palatal velar ($\hat{k}$) resonate with a voiced aspirated dental (d^{h}) and labiovelar (g^{wh}).

4. Performing the afterlife

The poets of Greek and Indo-Iranian antiquity seem to have made similar claims about the spoken realization of what could be tentatively termed (building on J. L. Austin's terminology) a *perlocutionary site*. Austin distinguished between a merely descriptive *locutionary act*, an *illocutionary act* considered to have a certain conventional force (e.g. an order or a warning) and a *perlocutionary act* considered to be achieved *by* saying something ("what we bring about or achieve *by* saying something" [Austin 1975: 109]). In order to accommodate such everyday usages of language to the logic of Indo-European ritual poetics, however, we need to shift focus from the practical achievement of an *actus perlocutus* to the purely theoretical, analogous achievement of a *situs perlocutus*, that is, of a site not just spoken *of* but effectively conjured *by* sung/spoken discourse. As it happens, Latin *situs* is a congener of Vedic *kṣétra*, Avestan *šiti-* and Greek *ktísis*.

References to such poetically realized dwellings (e.g. Avestan *šiti-* [*hušiti*] [Y. 30.10] and Vedic *kṣétra* [RV 10.33.6; 4.33.7 {*sukṣétra*}]) are explicitly made both in Gāthic and Vedic poetry, either more abstractly

to an abode of truth or, more concretely – as in the case of Kavaṣa Ailūṣa's lament – to a delightful dwelling designed to satisfy the desires of the poet's patron.

More than a fancy metaphor, the recurrent Gāthic notion of *garō dəmāna-* ('house of song/welcome') was apparently imagined by the poet and his auditor not just as a house *in which* praise is sung but as a dwelling *forged by* the poet's song.[2] According to Y 51.15, Ahura Mazdā enters into the *garō dəmāna-* as 'the first/primal one' (*paouruiiō*) by being first subjected to poetic praise, and it is along the same itinerary that the openhanded patron (the 'adherent' or 'benefactor' [*magauuan-* {cf. 1b}]) will finally receive the 'prize' (*mīžda*) of joining his supreme lord as a guest. This logic of eschatological compensation can be expressed differently by instead presenting the poet's 'fee' (*mīžda*) as the guarantor of the patron's 'higher existence' (*parāhū*) (cf. Y 46.19).[3] In other words, the fee-paying patron may enjoy the beneficial results of the ritual (= the patron's reward) only in return for due compensation (= the poet's reward). While observing that the cognate Gr. noun *misthós* is precisely the term used in the key passage from *Republic* 363c (see above) to designate everlasting drunkenness as the *reward of virtue* (*aretês misthós*), it seems plausible that this eschatological association of an economic concept was the result of inherited semantics.[4]

In its more abstractly developed form, the notion of a spoken location can be distinguished on a par with the rhetorical category of Gr. τόπος, that is, as a theme or formula equated with the physical features of a site. A case in point is the imagining of truth itself as

[2] The *garō dəmāna-* forms the basis of the eschatological concept of *Garōdmān* in Sassanian Pahlavi literature. It is described there as a region stretching beyond the stars and restoring everything to a state of youthful bliss. H. S. Nyberg concludes that the *garō dəmāna-* is imagined as the heavenly dwelling towards which the hymns of praise ascend. Relying mainly on Y 34.2, he suggests that Ahura Mazdā's thought (*manaŋhā* [instr.sg.]) and the poet's songs of praise (*garōbīš* [instr.pl.] *stūtąm*) functioned as a medium bringing the sacred actions of a man (*nərəš šiiaoϑanā* [nom. pl.]) up to that place (1938: 161).

[3] H/E/S seem to base their translation of the nominal sentence *parāhūm mīždəm* ("a prize providing higher existence") (Y 46.19) on the parallel case of RV 1.140.8 *ásum páram janáyan* ("procreating higher existence").

[4] Émile Benveniste comes close to this conclusion while commenting in passing on the curious match between the eschatological employment of *misthós* in the New Testament (e.g. L 6,23), and the Avestan notion of *mīžda-* as a felicitous recompense in the life to come (1969: 164).

a dwelling ("[as far as] the good dwelling of truth [etc.]" [*hušitōiš*[5] {…} *aŝaxiiā*{*ca*}]), which the st. Y 30.10 presents as the farthest goal of fame-winning racehorses (= chanting of a song of praise [H/S/E II: 56]) ("they [= the swift {steeds}] who will win good fame" [*yōi zazəṇtī vaŋhāu srauuahī*]). A striking counterpart occurs in Plato's allegory of the soul's journey (*Phaedrus* 247c-248b), in which reference is made to a charioteer reaching a region (τόπος) above the heaven so far unsung by the poets (οὔτε τις ὕμνησέ πω τῶν τῇδε ποιητὴς), yet still characteristically labelled – in keeping with the eschatological imagery – the "plain of truth" (ἀληθείας […] πεδίον).

5. Concluding remarks

I have tried to briefly outline a tendency in Greek and Indo-Iranian linguistic ideology to creatively explore the limits of invocatory (*perlocutionary*) achievement. In addition to their mundane claims of ensuring lasting fame, wealth and prestige for themselves and their patrons, the poets of Indo-European prehistory were apparently inclined to penetrate deeper into the mysteries of language and ceremonial gift exchange so as to create a new sense of otherworldliness. Since the intangible properties of language and value would have already appeared real enough in their capacity as qualities of elaboration and accumulation, the prospect of effectively realizing an otherwise unrealistic state of affairs *by means of* speech and value should have appeared sufficiently persuasive to gain in currency. A poet's reminder to the effect of his long-lasting song as an audiovisual edifice, attracting attention by both the sounding of words and the seeming of things of which they speak, was apparently a good way to start imagining a world in which to endure unbound by the contingencies of the ordinary world.

Excursus: the Germanic horizon

Although this hereditary repertoire has not been straightforwardly preserved in recorded Germanic poetry (e.g. **hlewas undwinanan*), one might still find significant repercussions of the linguistic ideology that once lay behind it. I emphasize this point in order to distinguish

[5] As for the 'good dwelling' (*hušiti*), cf. Ved. *sukṣití, kṣétra-* (above [RV 10.33.6c]), and *sukṣétra-* (above [RV 4.33.7] apropos of the 'good fields' made by the Ṛbhus while sleeping at Agohya's) (Jackson 2016). Cf. also the Gr. verb κτίζω used in the Orphic fragment quoted above.

between what could be taken to represent either superficial traces of poetic embellishment or a more genuine poetic ideology at work beneath the surface of such expressions. In view of the latter alternative, it can be assumed that Germanic poetry belonged in a long continuum of traditional cultic performance that included hired poets who took pride in a craft considered just as efficacious as it was rightfully expensive.

In order to uncover such tendencies among the Old Norse skalds, I should like to proceed from the last strophe (25) of Egill Skallagrímsson's *Arinbjarnarkviða* and the etymology of ON *bragr* (< PIE **b^{h}rógĝ^{h}-o*), and then continue by briefly examining two remarkable eschatological poems from 10-century Norway (*Eiríksmál* and *Hakonarmál*). These poems will be compared with particular regard to poetic strategies of eschatological perlocution, that is, to the performative realization of an otherworldly situation as a perceived poetic (perlocutionary) realization of its mere (locutionary) description.

> Vask árvakr,
> bark orð saman
> með málþjóns
> morginverkum;
> hlóðk lofkǫst
> þann's lengi stendr
> óbrotgjarn
> í bragar túni.
>
> I was awake early, / I brought words together, / with the speech-servant's / morning-work; / I loaded a heap of praise / which will long stand / unbroken / in the enclosure of poetry [*bragr*].

Apart from the significance of its meta-poetic usage in this particular strophe, the term *bragr* (< PIE **b^{h}rógĝ^{h}-o*) is itself genuine testimony to the Germanic inheritance of Indo-European cultic poetry in that it finds a surprising match in the self-referential hymnic vocabulary of the Vedas. It is an inherited term denoting poetry with an apparent emphasis on its formative aspects of ritual enactment.

> The root **b^{h}reĝ^{h}-* 'to formulate by religiously correct means' is unattested in its primary verbal form. Neverthelses, such a verb should once have existed, since the formation **b^{h}r̥ĝ^{h}-tó*, from which Gaulish-Celtic (Larzac) *brixtom* = OIr. *bricht* n. 'ritual utterance, spell' derrives, probably goes back to a former verbal adjective. Old Indic *bráhmaṇ-* 'correct formulation,

> design' derrives from *$b^hrégĝ^h$-mn̥ or *$b^hrógĝ^h$-mn̥, ON *bragr* m. 'poetry, art of poetry' from *$b^hrógĝ^h$-o-.[6] (Schaffner 1999: 184 [my translation])

While scholars specializing more discretely on the Germanic world will not be easily persuaded that a tradition so astonishingly remote from 9th- and 10th-century Scandinavia could offer any decisive insights into the art of skaldic poetry, one might take initial stock of the fact that the *bráhman* is created by the god Varuṇa and passed on to the poets (RV 1.105.15) just as the *bragr* is given by Odin to the skalds (*Hyndlulióð* 3). The fact that the term recurs in the names of both the god of poetry Bragi and the first canonized skald Bragi Boddason is probably not coincidental. M. Clunies Ross points out that "[t]he connection between Bragi the poet and Bragi the god is uncertain, but it seems likely that Bragi's iconic status as the first skald [...] contributed to the formation of the concept of a deity closely associated with the practice of skaldic verse." (Clunies Ross 2017: 26). I prefer a reversal of the argument. Considering Bragi's iconic status as the first skald, it seems likely that his name (or poetic nom de plume) was retrospectively ascribed to him based on the concept of a deity closely associated with the practice of skaldic verse. The Old Norse usages of *bragr* suggest a strong interconnectedness between the poem/ritual utterance, the (divine [Bragi the god] as well as human [Bragi the poet]) agent of poetry, and the site of poetry to result from that agency (the enclosure of poetry). An analogous concept occurs in Vedic poetry either as a personification of the verbal formulation (*brahmán*) or as an independent deity understood as its master (Bṛhaspati/Brahamaṇaspati ["master of *bráhman*"]) and leader of the primordial singers (or Aṅgirases) who verbally release the cattle and dawns from their captivation.

By the time of the impending dissolution of public pagan worship in Scandinavia during the latter half of the 10th century, two skaldic poems stand out as unique exemplars of eschatological imagination. I am referring to the anonymous poem *Eiríksmál* (*Eirm*) and the poem

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[6] "**bhreĝh-* 'religiöses korrekt formulieren' ist eine nicht primär verbaler Form bewahrte Wurzel. Dennoch dürfte ein solches Verbum einmal existiert haben, denn die bildung **bhr̥ĝh-tó-*, von der gallisch-keltisch (Larzac) *brixtom* = air. *bricht* n. 'ritueller Spruch, Zauberspruch' abstammen, geht wohl auf ein ehemaliges Verbaladjektiv dieser Wurzel zurück. Ai. *bráhmaṇ-* 'korrekte Formulierung, Gestaltung' stammt aus **bhréĝh-mn̥* oder **bhróĝh-mn̥*, aisl. *bragr* m. 'Dichtung, Dichtkunst' aus **bhróĝh-o-*."

Hákonármál (*Hák*) by the Norwegian skald Eyvindr skáldaspillir. They were composed in praise of fallen Norwegian kings (Eiríkr blóðøx and Hákon [inn góði] Haraldsson) who had both probably been baptized in England yet restored to a context of pagan praise and burial in their home country (Eiríkr in England possibly in 954 and Hákon from fatal injuries in the battle on the island of Storð *c.* 961). In spite of arguments to the contrary (cf. von See 1961), most scholars believe that *Eirm* predates *Hák* and was used by Eyvindr as a model.

Although the arrival of fallen kings at Valhǫll to join the warrior afterlife was very likely a motif from which the pagan skalds drew heavily in praising dead rulers, there is only one extant earlier poem to fit into this ritual genre, namely Þorbjǫrn hornklofi's *Haraldskvæði* from *c.* 900. On the other hand, since a related pictorial formula on several Merovingian to Viking age picture stones from Gotland (including a horseman greeted by a woman with a drinking horn) can be safely linked to a burial context, the prevalence and importance of the ritual genre has reasonable coverage elsewhere (see Figure 2).

Let me begin by outlining the structure of the two poems and then continue by highlighting some of the aspects that I consider most critical to my current purpose.

Eirm is set in Valhǫll in conjunction to the arrival of King Eiríkr. The extant nine verses are composed in the form of a dialogue between speakers identified in the manuscripts as the gods Odin and Bragi, Sigmundr in his presumed role as leader of the einherjar, and finally King Eírikr himself. Odin begins by reporting a dream in which he prepares Valhǫll for a slain army. He awakens the einherjar, asking them to strew the benches and rinse the drinking cups; he asks the Valkyries to bring wine in expectation of glorious men (1–2). Bragi, upon hearing the noise, falsely assumes that a feast is being prepared for Baldr (3). Odin admonishes the god not to speak folly, since he should know that the clangour is made for Eiríkr (4). Sigmundr and his son Sinfjǫtli are asked to go meet Eírikr (5). Sigmundr wants to know why Odin expects Eírikr rather than some other king, and why Eiríkr would have been deprived of victory. Odin replies that Eiríkr has reddened his sword in many a land, and that he is needed in Valhǫll to defend the home of the gods against the grey wolf (6–7). In the two final strophes, the last of which abruptly breaks before an anticipated enumeration of five kings, Sigmundr welcomes Eiríkr into the hall and asks him to name the kings who accompany him from the battle (8–9). Eiríkr promises to name them all and identifies himself as the sixth (9).

Figure 2. Welcome to Valhall! Picture stone from Broa in Halla, Gotland (*c.* 8th to 9th century), found in conjunction with a burial site.

Hák begins in the past tense with a vivid description of the battle of Fitjar at Storð (961) on the pretext of two of Odin's Valkyries (Gǫndul and Skǫgul) having chosen Hákon as one of the kings to join Odin in Valhǫll (1–9). Hákon is then described in preparing for battle under his battle-standard (2), eventually casting his mail-shirt to the ground and cheerfully joking with his men as he goes into battle (3–4). Shields burst and swords burn in bloody wounds

as people sink down before the tide of blood (5–8). Upon seeing the crowd of fallen warriors, Gǫndul says the force of the gods will now grow since Hákon is invited to their home with his army (10). In the following verse, the poem shifts to a dialogic mode when Hákon hears the Valkyries and reproaches them for deciding wrongly against those worthy of victory (11–12). Skǫgul replies that she shall now ride to the green abode of the gods, telling Odin that a supreme ruler will come to serve him in person (13). The scene then changes to Valhǫll, where Odin commands the gods Hermóðr and Bragi to go meet Hákon as he approaches the hall (14). Standing by the entrance all drenched in blood, Hákon tells the two emissaries that he fears the intentions of Odin (a possible reference to the fact that Hákon once had renounced his pagan ways) (15). Bragi assures the king that he will have quarter from the einherjar and join the symposium of the Æsir (16). After four intermediary verses (esp. 18) that seem to aim at restoring Hákon's honour in terms of his pagan obligation (17–20), a final verse (21) leaves the audience with a sombre anticipation of pagan demise: "Livestock are dying, kinsfolk are dying, land and realm become deserted, since Hákon went with the heathen gods; many a nation is enslaved."

As the careful reader will have already noticed, the god Bragi is given a key function in both poems as a veritable model for the eulogizing skald. In *Eirm* it is Bragi who is asked by Odin to correctly distinguish the fallen recipient, whereas in *Hák* it is Bragi who is asked by Odin to go and meet Hákon in the company of the messenger Hermóðr. They seem to be doing so on a structural par with the heroes Sigmundr and Sinfjǫtli in *Eirm*.

Before returning to Bragi, I would like to briefly resume where we just took off, that is, with the freestanding final verse of *Hák*. As suggested by the incipit *Deyr fé, deyja frændr…* in its two familiar intertexts – as given by the two consecutive variant verses *Hávamál* 76 and 77 – its pagan audience would not have expected it to result in an evocation of decay but rather in a redemptive reference to the restorative power of poetic fame (*órðstír* [76] and *dómr* [77]).

76. Deyr fé, deyja frændr,
deyr sjalfr it sama,
en orðstírr deyr aldregi,
hveim er sér góðan getr.

77. Deyr fé, deyja frændr,
deyr sjalfr it sama,
ek veit einn, at aldrei deyr:
dómr um dauðan hvern.

76. Livestock are dying, kinsfolk are dying, / die you shall accordingly, / but renown never dies, / for whom good is won.

77. Livestock are dying, kinsfolk are dying, / die you shall accordingly, / I know one that never dies: / fame upon each dead [man].[7]

One is reminded of the closing funeral scene in *Beowulf* (3169ff), describing twelve atheling-born men riding about the burial mound of their dead chieftain, chanting dirges and eulogies in his honour, for (I paraphrase) "it is appropriate [*gedefe*] that men laud [*deman*; cf. *dōm*] their master-friend when hence he goes from life in the body forlorn away." Why is it appropriate? Because without their laudation (*dōm*) he has no life apart from his body. Since this was also the unmistakable purport of Eyvindr's poem, the pagan skald might have left it implicit in the stead of a more urgent reminder of the impending threat of a dying tradition without which such a purport would be null and void.

Bragi's presence at the site of reception of fallen warriors should give us a fairly good idea of what the songs performed by skalds at pagan funeral feasts were all *about* and assumed to *achieve*. We may simply imagine the site, personnel and hospitable gestures described in such songs as replications of the site of eulogy. Bragi is not just an otherworldly character *described* by the skald but a mediating personification of the poetic force by which the skald *performs* the final elevation of his recipient to enduring excellence in the afterlife. It thus seems plausible to imagine the festive site of such performances – whether an echoing banquet hall or an outdoor gathering by a funeral mound – as a perceived prefiguration of the event described by the skald.

The fallen hero's welcome at the perlocutionary site of song, or chiselled in stone at the burial site, is an event perpetuated and realized in a medium that was probably understood to entail performative/transformative features in addition to those descriptive and self-explanatory ones that remain as the sole legible trait of such scenes.

[7] I replicate Fulk's 2012 translation of *Hák* 21 in so far as it exactly matches the *Hávamál* stanzas. The rest of the translation is mine.

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3. Initials for initiates
Phonic mystagogy, "audiovisuality" and the eschatology of the *Gathas*

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Abstract

This chapter analyzes the construction of a stanza in Zarathushtra's preliterate *Gathas*, Yasna 45.3, in the light of the rest of the Gathic corpus, and attempts to show that the details of composition aim to replicate a vision that Zarathushtra claims to have had. The stanza's composition offers an equivalence of the spatiotemporality of the vision's protology and eschatology, and, via symbolic initial sounds of the stanza's phrases, represents the role of the divine entity 'Good Mind' in the scheme of eschatological requitals. The architectonics of the stanza thus establish a framework for "audiovisuality", a phenomenon that is further evidenced by the relationship of Yasna 33.7 to Yasna 29.11.

I open with a quotation from "5. Concluding remarks" of Peter Jackson Rova's chapter in the present volume, "Dwellings Undwindling: Towards an Indo-European poetics of perlocutionary sites":

> A poet's reminder to the effect of his long-lasting song as an audiovisual edifice, attracting attention by both the sounding of words and the seeming of things of which they speak, was apparently a good way to start imagining a world in which to endure unbound by the contingencies of the ordinary world.

Also prefatorily relevant for my present chapter is Jackson Rova's (loc. cit.) idea of the archaic Greek, Vedic and Gathic poems having otherworldly loci conceived of as constituted by the words of the poems themselves. I shall also take further Jackson Rova's perceptive remarks on the Gathic *garō dəmāna-* 'House of Song' (for the meaning and origin of the term, see Schwartz 2023) as Mazdā Ahura's home, in

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which the poet's patrons (*magauuan-*) are said to be destined to become guests. Jackson Rova's citation there of Vedic evidence for Proto-Indo-European **ĥklewos tetĥ-* 'to fashion praise/glory' also entails my prefatory mention of Laura Massetti's examples with PIE **tetĥ-* 'to fashion' (originally 'to craft as a carpenter', M.S.) in her contribution "Orpheus and the Ṛbhus: Fashioning drinks for the afterlife" in this volume. Under "fashioning words/sacred formulations", she compares Vedic *takṣ-* … *bráhman-*, Pindar's *epéōn téktones* and its cognates Vedic *takṣ-* … *vácas* and Avestan *vacastašti-*. Since I shall be focusing on the construction of a Gathic stanza that is also a mantra, I note now as parallel to Vedic *takṣ-* with *bráhman-*, Vedic *takṣ-* with *mantra-* as having a Gathic cognate phrase (Yasna 29.7 *mąθrəm taš-*) and I stress that Av. *vacastašti-* means specifically 'a Gathic stanza' (as consisting of words tectonically crafted).

Accordingly, my focus shall be Yasna 45.3 as a mantra that I shall show has an architectonic, i.e. architectural structure, to which I speculatively apply the characterization "audiovisual", taking the adjective more literally than Peter Jackson Rova may have meant it, since I posit for it both an acoustic (phonic) aspect and a quasi-visual aspect. The passage and its Gathic parallels are chosen because they accord with the theme of the present volume, Indo-European accounts of the afterlife. I detail linguistic strategies as part of the poem's mystagogy – phonic encryptions and, specifically, coded use of initial sounds – an amazingly complex example of which I treated in Schwartz 2015: 53–55, and cf. 55–56 for the present focal example; for a Gathic acrostic, see Schwartz 2018, important for my methodology of Gathic interrelationships; and see also Schwartz 2003a, where Pindaric material also figures.

The following conventions will be employed: Y (plus two-digit number = numeration of the seventeen individual Gathic poems in the later liturgical Yasna sequence; the numeration has nothing to do with the compositional order of the poems; see Schwartz 2024); after the Y-number and period (.) a further number refers to the stanza cited, and the letters a–e refer to the line involved. Thus Y 45.3e = Yasna 45, third stanza, last line. Forms in slashes (/…/) represent reconstructed phonemic renderings, as per Beekes (1988); here /v/ indicates a sound like English *w*.

Here is Y 45.3:

aṯ frauuaxšiiā | aŋhāuš ahiiā paouruuīm
yąm mōi vīduuå̊ | mazdå̊ vaocaṯ ahurō

yōi īm vā nōiṯ | iθā mąθrəm varəšəṇtī
yaθā īm | mānāicā vaocacā
aēibiiō aŋhāuš | auuōi aŋhaṯ apāməm

Lo! I shall proclaim this existence's primal [mantra],
which the Knower, Mazdā Ahura, told me:
whoever of you will not effect this mantra
exactly as I think it and will tell it,
"woe!" will be their existence's final [thing].

The stanza may be reconstructed phonemically thus (the bold letters will be explained below):

/at fra vaxšyā | ahauš ahya parviyam
yam **m**ai **v**idvāh | **m**azdā **v**aucat ahurah
yai im **vah** nait | iθā **man**θram **v**aršanti
yaθā *imam | **m**anāi-ca **v**auca'ā-ca
aibyah ahauš | avai ahat apamam/

The stanza is a ring composition *in parvo*. The first line and the last line both have /ahauš […] ah-/; the echoism of the last line occurs amid onomatopoeic /a-/ alliteration, and the word 'first' end the first line, and the word 'last' (= 'final') ends the last line. All three middle lines begin with relative /ya-/. Moreover, the verb stem *vaoca-* = /vauca-/ 'tell' occurs in both the second and the fourth lines.

Phonically, the three inner lines have a total of four phrases consisting of a word with initial /m-/, followed immediately by a word with initial /v-/. In addition, in the central line, the third words of each hemistich yield the syllables **vah** and **man**. Thereby, in addition to the four phrases beginning with **m- v-** and symbolizing /manah- vahu-/ 'Good Mind', the syllables **vah** and **man** symbolize the more common order /vahu- manah-/, again 'Good Mind'.

Good Mind is the most important aspect of Mazdā Ahura ('the Wise Lord'), which also presents the optimal rational quality of human thinking; thus in Y 45.3 there is symbolization of the role of Good Mind in the divine scheme of individual eschatology. The poem complements the dire report of Y 45.3 by stressing Good Mind in Y 45.9 and 10 as bringing about a happy afterlife for Mazdā Ahura's worshippers.

After Y 45.3, Y 45.4 (with proclamation as "the best thing of existence") decrypts the phonic encoding of Y 45.3: "I know [Mazdā,] the Father of efficacious Good Mind". Here "I know", vis-à-vis Y 45.3b "Mazdā the Knower told" and Y45.3 "[I] will tell", constitutes a

transformation of the phrase type indicating SPEECH TO THE KNOWER. I see the latter phrase type as an inherited Indo-European formula-type that signifies the presence of language that requires decoding.

Such a formula is attested in the Orphic tradition, whence it seems to have passed into the Pindaric text to be discussed here (cf. Schwartz 2003a with West 1983: 110, 83–84 [in which, note the allusion to eschatology that precedes O. 2.83 seq., entailing a paradise for the righteous and punishments for the wicked]; further examples of Pindaric encoding in Schwartz 2003a: 383–384). The immediately relevant Pindaric passages are to be seen in Pindar, O. 2.83–2.91, which I translate as follows (numbering lines to be explicated in detail):

> I have many swift missiles under my arm
> within my quiver
> (85) which have sound for those who understand, but which want
> people who can bring them into numinous manifestation.
> He who knows a great deal is skillful by nature, but the mere learners are rash,
> (87) chattering with all manner of verbiage, like ravens, to no effect, versus the divine bird of Zeus.
> Come now, direct the bow at the target, my spirit: [at] whom/what are we shooting
> arrows of good fame going forth from a gentle mind?
> (91) At Akragas [am I] aiming

L. 85 has the formula indicating SPEECH TO THE KNOWER, as well as the key term *hermēneús* (here gen. pl.); my 'bring[ing] into numinous manifestation', along with my basic construal of the line, are based on Glenn W. Most's "Pindar, O. 2.83–90" where it is shown that *hermēneús* in archaic Greek referred to someone who brings speech from a state of inchoate potentiality into overtness, where the message is associated with the realm of the divinity, and prophecy; cf. in Most's own translation for L. 85, 'oracular announcers'. Following Most's parallels (pp. 312–313), one can say that, in coming out of (latent) hiddenness within the quiver, the arrows of speech to be shot by Pindar will bring forth their state of (patent) manifestation. Whereas Most denies that Pindar, in our passage, has any obscurantism addressed to a special audience (p. 305), I see the passage as having such an intent as its dénouement. The description of the disorderly speech of the prolix tyros, in the long L. 85, contains the same sounds, albeit scrambled, as the two-word L. 91, which expresses Pindar's target, that is, his patron Theron in his city:

(85) pANglõSSIAI korAKeS hõS AKRANTA GARUEToN
(91) AKRAGANTI TANUSAIS.

The contrast illustrates the difference between the unordered realm of potential language vs. Pindar's literally focused formulation, which (unlike the speech of his rivals) brings about the desired effect.

In fact, we shall see below at Yasna 30.1–2 a Gathic instance in which a targeted word is foregroundedly scrambled within other words (via the technique pointed out for Pindar), here, moreover, within the formula that indicates SPEECH TO THE KNOWER. For now, however, further examples of the symbolic encryption of the initials of /vahu manah/ 'Good Mind' will be given.

We start with Y 51.8:

aṯ zī tōi ***v****axšiiā* ***m****azdā* | ***v****īdušē zī nā* ***m****ruiiāṯ*
hiiaṯ akōiiā drəguuāitē | *uštā yə aṣəm dādrē*
huuō zī mąθrā šiiātō | *yə* ***v****īdušē* ***m****rauuaitī*

So therefore, I say to Thee, O Mazda, for a man should speak to the Knower, what consists in evil for the wrongsome one, success for him who upholds Rightness. For this mantrist is content, who will speak to the Knower.

For decryption of the symbolism of the three phrases with *v- m-*, the opening 'So therefore' points back to the last hemistich of the preceding stanza, Y51.7c, end, *manaŋhā vohū sāŋ́hē* 'at/for the proclamation of Good Mind', which in its stanza's context completes a request to Mazdā for 'integrity and immortality, endurance and perpetuity', that is, for the maintenance of the body in the afterlife.

The overt term 'Good Mind' is found in Y 31.5 as part of a series of words with initials *v- v- m- m-*, introduced by *m- v- v-* (… *v-*):

taṯ ***m****ōi* ***v****īcidiiāi* ***v****aocā* | *hiiaṯ* ***m****ōi aṣā dātā* ***v****ahiiō*
v*īduiiē* ***v****ohū* ***m****anaŋhā* | ***m****āṇcā daidiiāi yehiiā mā ərəšiš*
tācīṯ mazdā ahurā | *yā nōiṯ vā aŋhaṯ aŋhaitī vā*

Tell me that better thing which has been created/given for me by Rightness, that I may [discriminatively] discern it, in order to know via Good Mind and put thought into that of which I am a poet-seer, indeed for those things, O Mazdā Ahura, which will not be or will be.

A final example of alliterative patterning plus the formula SPEECH TO THE KNOWER is the stanza standing ring-compositionally counter to Y 31.6, Y 31.17:

*katārəm aṣauuā vā | drəguuå vā vərənuuaitē **m**aziiō*
*vīduuå **v**īdušē **m**raotū | **m**ā əuuīduuå aipī dābāuuaiiaṯ*
*zdī nā mazdā ahurā | **v**aŋhāuš fradaxštā **m**anaŋhō*

Whom – is it the righteous or the wrongsome one – is one to believe more?
Let knower speak to knower; let not the non-knower prattle.
Be for us, O Mazdā Ahura, the *sign-shower* of Good Mind.

Here I use the original sense of *fradaxštar-* (on which see below on Y 51.9) for the agent noun of the verb *fra daxš-*, which comes to mean 'teacher, explicator, guide' within Avestan. In our present passage, 'sign-shower'/'explicator of Good Mind' could, inter alia, refer to making the symbolism of the *v- m-* patterning for /vahu- manah-/ explicit. A more general sense of *fradaxštar-*, still with reference to pointing to linguistic decryption, and (as also at Y 51.17) with 'Good Mind' representing the power of ratiocination, is to be found for Y 51.3:

ā vā gəuš.ā hāmiianṭū | yōi vā šiiaoθanāiš sārəṇtē
ahurō aṣā hizuuā | uxδāiš vaŋhāuš manaŋhō
yaēšąm tū pouruiiō | mazdā fradaxštā ahī

Let your ears be focused, you who are already united via your deeds.
Thou art the Lord [Ahura] with Rightness, via the tongue [= speech], through utterances of Good Mind,
of which Thou, O Mazdā [Wise One], art the first guide.

The "guidance" is to the syntax of the next stanza, in which 51.4b–c should have the following construal: 'Where is Rightness honored, where Holy Harmonious Thought, where Best Mind? Where? Via Thy Dominion, O Mazdā.' The usual translation of the last hemistich of the stanza as 'Where via Thy Dominion/power?' (or the like) leaves matters unanswered and lacks motivation. The instrumental *xšaθrā* (instead of locative **xšaθrōi*) addresses the mode whereby the previous list of divine entities is honoured. Compare Y 34.11 and 15, 48.11 and 30.6. The reference of *fradaxštar-* in Y 51.3 to as guide for cryptic language may be a generalization from Y 51.17, with regard to decryption of the symbolic *v- m-* alliteration.

Now, it should be observed that non-symbolic alliteration is comparatively sparse in the *Gathas* (as compared, e.g., to the *Rig Veda*). Parallel to *v- m-* patterning, which is alliteratively symbolic of /vahu- manah-/ 'Good Mind', on which phrase it is obviously based, we also have at Y 33.3 repeated *a- v-* alliteration, which is symbolic of the divine entity *aṣa- vahišta-* 'Best Rightness'; compare further Schwartz 2015: 55–56.

A different alliterative symbolism is that of *a- d-*, based on the pervasive Gathic dualism /arta(van-)/ 'right(eous)' vs. /drug(vant-)/ 'wrong(some)'. We have already encountered it above at Y 51.8b *hiiaṯ akōiiā drəguuāitē | uštā yā aṣəm dādrē*. It is also featured in the next stanza, Y 51.9:

yąm xšnūtəm rānōibiiā då̊ | θβā āθrā suxrā mazdā
aiiaŋhā xšustā aibī | ahuuāhū daxštəm dāuuōi
rāšaiieŋhē drəguuaṇtəm | sauuaiiō aṣauuanəm

That reciprocity which Thou hast established for both sides via Thy bright/red fire, O Mazdā,
by means of the molten metal, is a sign to be given in consciousnesses
for the destruction of the wrongsome one, and for the strengthening of the righteous one.

The phrase 'sign [*daxšta-*] to be given within consciousnesses' parallels the history of Italian *insegnare* and French *enseigner* 'to teach, guide', and illuminates the semantics of *fradaxštar-*.

Finally, the symbolic initials are especially clear at Y 31.20, on whose text compare Insler 1975: 43 with 191:

yā āiiaṯ aṣauuanəm | diuuamnəm hōi aparəm xšaiiō
darəgəm āiiū təmaŋhō | duš.xᵛarəθəm auuaētās vacō
təm vå̊ ahūm drəguuaṇtō | šiiaoθanāiš xᵛāiš daēnā naēšaṯ

Whoever comes to the side of the righteous one, heavenly brightness will be his future possession;
a long lifetime of hellish darkness, foul food, and the word "woe" –
to that existence, O wrongsome ones, will your envisionment lead you via your own actions.

This last passage returns us to Y 45.3, for which I shall now try to justify its having an "audiovisual" quality. It should be kept in mind that our Gathic text was nothing written that could be seen by its audience, since the *Gathas*, like the *Rig Veda*, was a purely oral, preliterate text, written down many centuries after its composition. What I suggest may have been "quasi-visual" as to Y 45.3 consists in its architectonic structure, with its firstness and lastness positionally framing the stanza, and the symbolical 'Good Mind' represented within.

I propose preliminarily that Y 45.3, among other Gathic passages, is based on a vision that Zarathushtra had (cf. Schwartz 2000 [2003], in which the various elements of these visions, including the divine female hypostasis *Ārmaiti* 'Harmonious Thought', occur), and that Y 45.3 attempts a verbal replication of an aspect of that vision.

The most relevant passage is Y 43.4, of which the final line marks the advent of Good Mind to Zarathushtra:

aṯ θβā māṇghāi | taxməmcā spəṇtəm mazdā
hiiaṯ̰ tā zastā | yā tū hafšī auuå̊
yå̊ då̊ aṣ̌īš | drəguuāitē aṣ̌āunaēcā
θβahiiā garəmā | āθrō aṣ̌ā.aojaŋhō
hiiaṯ̰ mōi vaŋhāuš | hazā jimaṯ̰ manaŋhō

And I shall think Thee mightily valiant and holy, O Mazdā,
when with that hand with which Thou upholdest aids/those
requitals which Thou givest to the wrongsome and righteous
via the heat of Thy fire, which is strong though Rightness,
when (from that hand) Good Mind's forcefulness comes upon me.

Then comes Zarathushtra's report of the vision, Y 43.5:

spəṇtəm aṯ θβā | mazdā māŋ́hī ahurā
hiiaṯ θβā aŋhāuš | ząθōi darəsəm paouruuīm
hiiaṯ då̊ šiiaoθanā | mīždauuąn yācā uxδā
akəm akāi | vaŋ^{v}hīm aṣ̌īm vaŋhaouuē
θβā hunarā | dāmōiš uruuaēsē apəmē

So, holy did I think Thee, O Mazdā Ahura,
when I saw Thee at the birth of existence as primal,
when Thou didst bring about actions and utterances to have payments,
bad for the bad one, good reward for the good one,
via Thy skill, at the final turning point of creation.

The parallels to Y 45.3 in phraseology and meaning are obvious. Y 43.6 continues with Mazdā's advent with His Dominion, via His Holy Spirit, with Good Mind, the stanza concludes in correlations with Y 45.4: the presence of Harmonious Thought, and the undeceivability (*nōiṯ̰* + √*dab*) of Mazdā Ahura. In the next stanza, Y 43.7a–b, and like every second stanza from there (Y 43.9a–b, Y 43.11a–b, Y 43.13a–b and Y 43.15a–b), the first line of Y 43.5 is followed by *hiiaṯ̰ mā vohū | pairī.jasaṯ̰ manaŋhā*, giving: 'So holy did I think Thee, O Mazdā Ahura || when He [The Holy Spirit] attended me with Good Mind.' This striking overt systematic mention of Good Mind is parallel to the emphasis on Good Mind via encryption in Y 45.3.

With a variant of Y.43.5a etc. as incipit, we have another report of a vision, featuring Mazdā as 'Father of Good Mind' (= Y 45.4c) at Y 31.8:

aṯ θβā māŋ́hī paouruuīm | mazdā yazūm stōi manaŋhā
vaŋhāuš ptarəm manaŋhō | hiiaṯ θβā həm cašmainī [hāṇ]grabəm
haiθīm aṣahiiā dąmīm | aŋhāuš ahurəm šiiaoθanaēšū

And I thought Thee, O Mazdā, as primal, and to be youthful via [Thy] mind,
[and] the Father of Good Mind, when I grasped Thee in [my] eye,
[Thee,] the true Creator of Rightness, [and] Lord of existence among actions.

'Eye' = 'vision' is found again in Y 45 itself, at 8b–c, where /vahu-manyu-/ 'Good Spirit' seems to be a variant of /vahu- manah-/ 'Good Mind':

nū zīṯ | cašmainī viiādarsəm
vaŋhāuš mainiiāuš | šiiaoθanahiiā uxδaxiiācā

For now I have gazed upon [Him, Mazdā Ahura] in a vision [lit. 'eye'] of Good Spirit, action and utterance.

Evidence that Zarathushtra's audience were enjoined to "see" the revelation represented by Y 45.3 will now be presented. Now, Y. 45.2 and Y 30.3 are the two Gathic passages in which there is an account, in visionary trappings, of the two primal spirits, one benign and one malign. Of these, Y 30 has the more explicit request for seeing (as well as hearing) and so provides evidence for "audiovisuality". Here are the first line and last hemistich of the three-line Y 30.1:

aṯ tā vaxšiiā išəṇtō | yā mazdāθā hiiaṯcīṯ vīdušē…
yā raocābīš darəsatā uruuāzā

I shall tell, O ye who seek, indeed to the knower, the things to be comprehended […]
that are to be seen amidst the lights via bliss.

This opening is amplified in the next stanza, Y 30.2a–b:

sraotā gāuš.āiš vahištā | auuaēnatā sūcā manaŋhā
āuuarənå̊ vīciθahiiā […]

Hear with your ears the Best Things: look with a bright mind
at the two options of choice […]

The formula SPEECH TO THE KNOWER signals encryption: the sounds of *vahištā* 'the [eschatological Best Things] to be heard' at Y 30.1a /at

TĀ VAxŠyĀ IŠanTAH/, *vahištā* being similarly encrypted in many other passages (cf. e.g. Y 31.1a and c). The results of the choice which are to be glimpsed are then set forth at Y 30.4, in which the phraseology of primality and finality with regard to existence, *paouruuīm … yaθā … apāməm aŋhuš*, corresponds to Y 45.3, and 'Best Mind' = 'Good Mind':

aṯcā hiiaṯ tā həm mainiiū | jasaētəm paouruuīm dazdē
gaēmcā ajiiāitīmcā | yaθācā aŋhaṯ apāməm aŋhuš
ačištō drəguuatąm | aṯ aṣāunē vahištəm manō

And when those two Spirits came together at the first [existence] they brought about
life and lifelessness, so that the existence of the wrongsome will be
the worst at the end, but Best Mind [will be] for the Righteous.

Y 45.1a–c, which parallels what we have noted for Y 30, anticipates the mantra (Y 45.1c *īm* masc. as in the metrical responsion at Y 45.3c) in terms of its brightness:

aṯ frauuaxšiiā | nū gūšō.dūm nū sraotā
yaēcā asnāṯ | yaēcā dūrāṯ išaθā
nū īm vīspā | ciθrā zī mazdå̊ŋhō.dūm

I shall tell forth, now listen and hear
– O you who seek from near and far –
this [mantra]; comprehend, for it is bright[ly clear].

It is moot whether the fact of Zarathushtra's name at the precise centre of Y 28 and Y 50, whereby all the systematically concentric stanzas may be said to radiate, can be claimed to be evidence of a phenomenon perceptually akin to visuality. However, the phenomenon of Gathic systematic concentrism does seem to provide a kind of evidence of parallel to visuality. This possibility is inherent in the relationship between Y 33.7 and Y 29.11.

In Y 33, the precise centre of the ring composition is between Y 33.7 and Y 33.8, that is, just after Y33.7c 'bright gifts' (and before Y 33.8a, the request for the divine entities to heed). Y. 33.8 is immediately preceded by Y 33.6c *tā tōi iziiā ahurā | mazdā darštōišcā həm. parštōišcā* 'Thus am I eager for Thy sight and consultation [i.e. 'hearing and consultation with Thee']'. This amounts to a request for seeing and hearing, on the basis of which my emendation to **darəsaṯ* 'and visually' in the next line (where a putative *darəšaṯcā* 'and boldly' makes less sense; the *š* is due to the preceding *darəštōišcā*). I take Y 33.7a *xᵛaiθiiā*

not from *xᵛatō* '(*by) oneself' but from an underlying *-ti-* abstract of *√xᵛan* 'to sound'. Here then is Y 33.7:

ā mā [ā]idūm vahištā | ā xᵛaiθiiācā mazdā darəsaṯcā
aṣā vohū manaŋhā | yā sruiiē parā magaonō
āuuiš nå aṇtarə hāṇtū | nəmaxᵛaitīš ciθrå rātaiiō

Come here to me, O Best Ones, here with sight and sound, O Mazda
with Rightness and with Good Mind, whereby I am [to be] heard/famed among the patrons [munificent ones].
May bright gifts of reverence be patent among us.'

Compare the finale stanza, Y 29.11:

kudā aṣəm vohucā | manō xšaθrəmcā aṯ mā maṣā
yūžəm mazdā frāxšnənē | mazōi magāi ā paitī.zānatā
ahurā nū nå auuarə | əhmā.rātōiš yūšmāuuatąm

Where are Rightness, Good mind, and Dominion? Now take account [*maṣā* < /márta/] of me,
You [all] – O Mazdā [too] – with foresight give recognition for the great patronage/munificence.
O Ahura, now [come] down to us because of our gift to those such as You [all].

Y 33.7 and Y 29.11 share the enumeration of the divine entities, *maga-/magauuan-* 'munificence/munificent', and dénouement *rāti-* 'gift' (which is emphasized as obligatory ring composition correspondence of the final and middle stanzas by Y 33.14a *rātā-*, referring to Zarathushtra giving himself as 'gift'). Most importantly, Y 33.7c, at the poem's MID-most location, refers to the gift as appearing *nå aṇtarə* 'aMIDst us', and Y 29.11c, in the last, as it were, "bottom" line, *nå auuarə* 'DOWN to us'.

Y 33.7, moreover, is self-referentially "audiovisual" in its phrasing, with visibility emphasized alongside audibility. It is significant that its counterpart, Y 29.11, was composed as a new finale to Y 29, replacing the old final stanza, which became a separate text (Y 27.13), the most sacred "Ahuna Vairiia prayer" (see Schwartz 2003b: 215–216, and for Y 29.11 and Y 33.7, cf. 246–247). The creation of the present Y 29.11 seems to have had, among other factors, a desire for a match with Y 33.7. As we have seen, in Y 33.7 and Y 29.11 there is positional focus on *rāti-* 'gift(s)', and in Y 33.7, in the context of sight and sound, *rāti-* is literally highlighted by *ciθra-* 'bright', in its greater self-referential context, reification of a traditional characterization of gifts as (metaphorically) splendid; compare Vedic *citrarāti-*.

Thus, we see that it is true to an amazing degree for Zarathushtra – and here we may ring-compositionally return to Jackson Rova's "5. Concluding remarks" – what the latter proposed for Zarathushtra's ancient forebears:

> [T]he poets of Indo-European prehistory were apparently inclined to penetrate deeper into the mysteries of language and ceremonial gift-exchange so as to create a new sense of otherworldliness.

I close by adding to the observation made at the outset that Y 45.3 is a one-stanza ring composition in itself; this as such is unique in the *Gathas*, and is further evidence that it was crafted (like Y 33.7 etc.) as a remarkable preliterate attempt, apparently experimental, at rendering spatiotemporality and audiovisuality, applied in Y 45.3 to a mystagogic eschatology.

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4. Orpheus and the Ṛbhus
Fashioning drinks for the afterlife*

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Abstract

The chapter centres on the figure of Orpheus and the Vedic Ṛbhus. After recapitulating the phraseological data which support the etymological connection between these two names and Hittite *ḫarpp-*^{mi} 'to ally with, to join', I examine a prerogative that Orpheus and the Ṛbhus seem to have in common: the capacity of constructing special objects that have a "ritual" relevance and/or fashion immortality.

1. Greek Ὀρφεύς and Vedic *ṚbhúṢ-*

In Greek sources of the Archaic and Classical Ages Ὀρφεύς is the name of a poet, who is identified as the son of Apollo or Oeagrus.[1]

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[1] Both traditions are exemplified in Σ in Ap. Rhod. 1.23 (= Asclepiades *FGrH* III 8) εἶναι δὲ Ὀρφέα, κατὰ μὲν Ἀσκληπιάδην, Ἀπόλλωνος καὶ Καλλιόπης, κατὰ δὲ ἐνίους Οἰάγρου καὶ Πολυμνίας "According to Asclepiades, Orpheus is the son of Apollo and Calliope, according to others of Oeagrus and Polymnia." Ancient commentators disagreed on whether Pind. *Pyth*. 4.176–177 follows a tradition according to which Orpheus is the son of Apollo (as per Chaeris *apud* Σ in Pind. *Pyth*. 4.313a) or whether ἐξ + genitive refers to φορμικτάς '*phorminx* player' (as argued by Ammonius *apud* Σ in Pind. *Pyth*. 4.313a). Giannini 1995 [2012^5]: 475 argues that ἐξ + genitive may indicate "sent from Apollo". In the *Argonautica* of Apollonius Rhodius, taking part in the Argonauts' expedition seems not to be Orpheus' own idea; according to Apollonius, Orpheus participates following Chiron's advice (Ap. Rhod. 1.33 Χείρωνος ἐφημοσύνῃσι πιθήσας). According to Pind. fr. 128c.11–12 SM, Orpheus is the son of Oeagrus (υἱὸν Οἰάγρου <δέ> ‖ Ὀρφέα).

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As far as we know, his name first occurs in a fragment of the Greek choral lyric poet Ibycus (6th century BCE), who calls him 'name-famed' (ὀνομάκλυτον Ὀρφήν, Ib. fr. 10a *PMG*).[2] However, paradoxically, we know very little of his fame from texts dated to Ibycus' time and before. From the Late Archaic to Early Classical Age, the situation changes notably. Now, Orpheus' famous name seems to have acquired some kind of authority. Indeed, he is credited with various inventions. According to Pindar, he "fathers" the *aoidai* (1.1); Aristophanes ascribes him the invention of 'ritualistic practices of initiations' (*teletai*, 1.2); Timotheus attributes him the invention of the lyre (1.3) and the fourth-century BCE sophist Alcidamas the invention of the letters of the alphabet (*grammata*, 1.4).

1.1 Pind. *Pyth*. 4.176–177

ἐξ Ἀπόλλωνος δὲ φορμικτὰς **ἀοιδᾶν πατήρ**
ἔμολεν, εὐαίνητος, **Ὀρφεύς**

From Apollo came the well-praised *phorminx*-player **Orpheus father of the songs**.

1.2 Aristoph. *Frogs* 1035 (= *Orphica* 547 I T Bernabé)

Ὀρφεὺς μὲν γὰρ **τελετάς** θ᾽ ἡμῖν **κατέδειξε** φόνων τ᾽ ἀπέχεσθαι

Indeed, **Orpheus showed** us **the ritual practices of initiations** and to refrain from murdering.

1.3 Timotheus *PMG* 15.222–223

πρῶτος ποικιλόμουσος **Ὀρ-**
φεὺς <χέλ>υν ἐτέκνωσεν

Orpheus honer of poetic thoughts was the first to **father the lyre**.

1.4 Alcidamas *Odysseus against the Treachery of Palamedes* 24

γράμματα μὲν δὴ πρῶτος **Ὀρφεὺς ἐξήνεγκε**, παρὰ Μουσῶν μαθών

[2] Orpheus is probably represented on a marble relief from Delphi dated to 570–560 BCE (identified as the metope of the frieze of the Siphnian Treasury). The figure leading Argo is inscribed with <ΟΡΦΑΣ>; cf. *LIMC* s.v. Orpheus 6.

> **Orpheus** was the first **to invent the alphabet**, having learned it from the Muses.[3]

Furthermore, Orpheus seems to have a special tie with the underworld and/or immortality. He is eponymous of the Orphic cult and Orphic corpus, a group of texts dealing with (1) mythological traditions that differ from those of 'official' Greek religion, for example the *Orphic Hymns* and the *Orphic Theogony*, and (2) rituals concerned with the destiny of the human soul after death.[4] It is unclear whether Orpheus' association with the afterlife relies on his poetic skills. In this chapter, however, I argue in favour of such a hypothesis. As noted by Bernabé & Jiménez San Cristóbal (2011: 71), we are told that other heroes or persons descended into the underworld (Theseus, Heracles, Pythagoras), but what they all do *not* have in common with Orpheus is being poets and/or being acknowledged as the source of information for poems about the afterlife. Conversely, Orpheus' *katabasis* came to be mythologized in a way that seems to be conditioned by the role of poetry within the episode of "Orpheus aux Enfers" itself.

According to several ancient sources, Orpheus travelled into the underworld to retrieve his beloved Eurydike. He managed to persuade Persephone to give him his spouse back thanks to his musical skills (e.g., 1.5). However, he ultimately lost Eurydike because he disregarded Persephone's instructions. Significantly, Orpheus *non omnis moritur*: according to a tradition attested in literary and iconographic sources dated to the 5th century BCE, after his body was torn to pieces by the maenads at the instigation of Dionysus,[5] Orpheus' head kept on singing and giving oracles.[6]

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[3] Cf. Linforth 1931 on the text. The tradition might be connected with what we read in Plato's *Republic* (364e): charlatans refer to *bybla*, which they attribute to the Muses or Orpheus (βίβλων δὲ ὅμαδον παρέχονται Μουσαίου καὶ Ὀρφέως). A connection between Orpheus and writing may be further recovered from the inspection of a 5th-century BCE red-figure cup by the Painter of Ruvo from Cambridge (*ARV*^{2} 1401): a man is writing down what seems to be dictated by Orpheus' head.

[4] Some of the texts belonging to the so-called Orphic corpus seem to have nothing to do with Orpheus. Indeed, "the one thing which we can be certain of is that some long-ago Orpheus was not the author [sc. of the *Orphica*]; rather some other author from a historical period has borrowed the name of Orpheus for his work (or has had it attached by another)" (Edmonds 2013: 3–4).

[5] This is the subject of Aeschylus' *Bassarids (TrGF,* 138–139 Radt = Eratosthenes *Catasterismi* 24 = *Orphica* 536 T and 1033 T Bernabé).

[6] *LIMC* s.v. Orpheus 68–70. On Orpheus as founder of the Muses' oracle in Lesbos see Graf 1988: 92–95; Faraone 2004; Watson 2013.

1.5 Eur. *Alc.* 357–359

εἰ δ' **Ὀρφέως** μοι γλῶσσα καὶ μέλος παρῆν,
ὥστ' ἢ **κόρην Δήμητρος ἢ κείνης πόσιν**
ὕμνοισι κηλήσαντά σ' ἐξ Ἅιδου λαβεῖν

If I had the tongue and the song of **Orpheus**, so that I could lead you out of Hades, **enchanting the daughter of Demeter or her husband with hymns**…

It has long been pointed out that Greek Ὀρφεύς may be etymologically related to Vedic *Ṛbhú-*.[7] In the *Rig Veda*, *Ṛbhávas*, plural of *Ṛbhú-*, applies to a group of three priest-poets (called Vāja, Vibhvan and Ṛbhu or Ṛbhukṣan) who achieve immortality thanks to their miraculous creations (1.6),[8] namely the multiplication of one cup that belonged to the carver-god Tvaṣṭar (1.7), the milking (?) of a cow (1.8), the building of the chariot of the Aśvins, the creation of Indra's fallow bay horses, and the rejuvenation of their parents (1.9).

1.6 RV 4.36.4c

áthā devéṣu amṛtatvám ānaśa

So then you attained immortality among the gods.

1.7 RV 4.33.5

jyeṣṭhá āha camasā́ dvā́ karéti
kánīyān trī́n kṛṇavāméti āha
kaniṣṭhá āha catúras karéti
tváṣṭa rbhavas tát panayad váco vaḥ

The eldest said, "I will make two cups [from one]." The younger said, "We will make three." The youngest said, "I will make four." O Ṛbhus, Tvaṣṭar wondered at that speech of yours.

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[7] The proposal can be traced back to Lassen 1840. It was later reprised by Estell 1999 and Jackson [Rova] 2014, 2016, 2023. The etymological connection between Vedic *Ṛbhú-* and ON *álfr*, OE *ælf* as derivatives of **h*$_2$*elb*^{h}- 'to be white', proposed by Haudry (1987) and further supported by Kazanas (2015), can be now rejected in the light of a new, more convincing etymology of ON *álfr* as a derivative of IE **h*$_2$*elg*^{wh}- 'to bring in, earn, fetch' proposed by Ginevra (forthcoming a).

[8] On the Ṛbhus in the *Rig Veda* cf. Ryder 1901; Chakravarty 1990; Brereton 2012.

1.8 RV 1.110.8a

níś cármaṇa ṛbhavo gā́m apiṃśata

O Ṛbhus, you carved out a cow from a hide.

1.9 RV 1.111.1

***tákṣan ráthaṃ** suvṛ́taṃ vidmanā́pasas*
***tákṣan hárī** indravā́hā vṛ́ṣaṇvasū*
tákṣan** pitṛ́bhyām ṛbhávo **yúvad váyas
***tákṣan** vatsā́ya **mātáraṃ** sacābhúvam*

They fashioned the smooth-rolling **chariot**, working with their know-how; **they fashioned the two fallow bays** that convey Indra and bring bullish goods. **They fashioned** – the Ṛbhus – for their parents **youthful vigor; they fashioned** for the calf **a mother** to stay by it.

From a purely formal point of view, Greek Ὀρφεύς and Vedic *Ṛbhú-* can be connected: Ὀρφεύς is a secondary *-ēu̯-*stem to **órp^{h}os*, i.e. a thematic derivative of the IE root **h$_3$erb^{h}-* 'to turn, change sides' (as per Weiss 2006), which also underlies Hittite *ḫarp(p)-^{mi}* 'to become an ally or a collaborator (of someone)'; *Ṛbhú-* is a *-u-*stem derived from the same root.[9] As I pointed out in a previous paper (Massetti 2017), phraseological analysis allows us to recover (1) a link between Greek Ὀρφεύς and Vedic *Ṛbhú-*, on the one hand, and (2) a link between Greek Ὀρφεύς, Vedic *Ṛbhú-* and Hittite *ḫarp(p)-^{mi}*, on the other. In what follows, I shortly recapitulate my hypothesis, accompanied by selected examples (Sections 2 and 3); then, building on Jackson Rova's hypothesis on the "eschatology of glory-through-poetry",[10] I speculate on how the speaking names Ὀρφεύς and *Ṛbhú-* reflect a connection between the mythological figures of poets-*primi inventores* and the afterlife (Sections 4 and 5).[11]

[9] How the semantics of the names reflect a tie with IE **h$_3$erb^{h}-* 'to turn, change sides' is debated: Jackson Rova (2023) proposes that Ὀρφεύς and *Ṛbhú-* reflect the condition of client ('ally, someone who is by one's side'), which is peculiar to poets in several Indo-European traditions of old attestation.

[10] See now Jackson Rova 2023: 33–76.

[11] Jackson [Rova] 2016.

2. Orpheus and the Ṛbhus as fashioners

Both Orpheus and the Ṛbhus are associated with poetic activity as well as with IE roots, which belong to the semantic field of 'creation' and 'carving'. Just like Orpheus (see above, Section 1), the Ṛbhus are said to be poets, i.e., 'fashioners of words/sacred formulations' (2.1).

2.1 RV 10.80.7a

agnáye ***bráhma ṛbhávas tatakṣuḥ***

For Agni did **the Ṛbhus fashion** their **formulation**.

Vedic *takṣ … bráhman-*, a collocation resembling Ved. *takṣ … vácas-* (matching Av. *vacastašti-* 'strophe', Pind. *Pyth*. 3.113 ἐπέων … τέκτονες)[12] contains the root *takṣ*, which often applies to the work of the Ṛbhus (cf. 1.9) and can be traced back to the IE root **tetḱ-* 'to fashion'. Although Greek derivatives of the same root (such as τεκταίνομαι 'to build', τέκτων 'craftsman') do not seem to describe the activities of Orpheus in the Greek sources in our possession, we may be able to recover a distant link between Orpheus and the semantic field of creation. As already touched upon (1.3 above = 2.2 below), Timotheus tells us that Orpheus fathers (Greek τεκνόω) the lyre.

2.2 Timotheus *PMG* 15.222–223

πρῶτος ποικιλόμουσος Ὀρ-
φεὺς <χέλ>υν ἐτέκνωσεν

Orpheus honer of poetic thoughts was the first **to father the lyre**.

The verb τεκνόω 'to beget, father' is remotely related to Vedic *takṣ*, since Indo-European **tetḱ-* 'to fashion' may reflect a reduplicated root ultimately based on **teḱ-* 'to give birth' (Bendahman 1993; cf. also *LIV*[2]: 638–639). The semantic link between **teḱ-* and **tetḱ-*, as well as the overlap between the notions of first fashioner/inventor and father (which intuitively and idiomatically overlap),[13] can be further supported by making reference to the literary model of Timotheus' verses,

[12] On which cf. Darmesteter 1878; Schmitt 1967: 297–298.

[13] Derivatives of **tetḱ-* apply to the semantic field of parenthood in Greek; cf. Ronzitti 1998. On Orpheus as the 'father of songs' see above, example 1.1. Inventors are the *fathers* of their invention, e.g. (*Mercurium*) *curvae lyrae parentem* "(Mercury) father of the hollow lyre" (Hor. *Carm*. 1.10.6).

the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*. In this text, the lyre is said to be an invention of the god Hermes, but his skill is described by means of Greek τεκταίνομαι (cf. Vedic *takṣ*).[14]

Significantly, in Timotheus' passage, Orpheus is said to be ποικιλόμουσος (freely translated by me as 'honer of poetic thoughts'). This compound displays a first member related to the Indo-European root **peiḱ-*, which underlies Greek ποικίλλω 'to decorate' and a second member related to the IE root **men-* 'to think'.[15] Indeed, as clearly shown by Calvert Watkins (1997: 248), IE **men-* underlies Greek Μοῦσα. In this connection, it is significant that the Ṛbhus' work is also denoted by means of Ved. *peś* 'to carve', a cognate of ποικίλλω and ποικίλος 'decorated, variegated, wrought in various colours' (2.3).[16]

2.3 RV 3.60.2ab

yā́bhiḥ śácībhiś camasā́ṁ ***ápiṃśata***
yáyā dhiyā́ gā́m áriṇīta cármaṇaḥ

By the powers with which you **have prepared** the cups, by the insight with which you have driven the cow out of the hide.

From this short survey, it is possible to observe that creativity at a poetic and non-poetic level is connected with Orpheus and the Ṛbhus: indeed, they are both associated to several creations. Moreover, their creativity is occasionally described by means of lexemes that are etymologically related. The list of common traits, however, does not end here but further extends to the effects of their constructions in the world of men.

3. Making things move, making things that move

Orpheus is usually described as capable of displacing things, making immoveable things move (together) or producing things that move. In several literary passages, he is said to make natural elements and animals move in time to his music (3.1–3.2). According to Apollonius Rhodius, Orpheus had led a group of wild oaks from the Pieria to the

[14] *Hom. Hymn Herm.* 25 Ἑρμῆς τοι πρώτιστα χέλυν τεκτήνατ' ἀοιδόν "Hermes was the first to make the *khélus* [= turtle and lyre] a singer."

[15] For meta-poetic metaphors in which derivatives of this root occur cf. Jackson [Rova] 2002. For other derivatives of this root underlying speaking names of mythological characters with a cosmological relevance cf. Ginevra 2019.

[16] This common phraseological trait and the comparison between Orpheus and the Ṛbhus is analyzed *in extenso* in McDonald 2014.

coast of Zone, where they had later remained as a memento of his μολπή (3.3). His kinetic capacity extends to the feelings of his listeners: when he arrives in the underworld, Orpheus manages to move the 'innerly motionless' souls of the dead (3.4).[17]

3.1 Simon. fr. 274 Poltera (567 *PMG*)

τοῦ καὶ ἀπειρέσιοι
πωτῶντ᾽ ὄρνιθες ὑπὲρ κεφαλᾶς,
ἀνὰ δ᾽ ἰχθύες ὀρθοὶ κυανέου ἐξ
ὕδατος **ἄλλοντο καλᾷ σὺν αὐδᾷ**

An innumerable flock of birds circled above his head. Fish **jumped straight up** out of the dark water **in time to the beautiful voice**.[18]

3.2 Eur. *Ba*. 561–562

ἔνθα ποτ᾽ **Ὀρφεὺς** κιθαρίζων **σύναγεν**
δένδρεα μούσαις,
σύναγεν θῆρας ἀγρώτας

Where once **Orpheus**, playing the *kithara*, **led together** all the trees, **led together** all the wild animals around him with beautiful sounds.

3.3 Ap. Rhod. 1.28–31

φηγοὶ δ᾽ ἀγριάδες, κείνης ἔτι σήματα μολπῆς,
ἀκτῆς Θρηικίης Ζώνης ἔπι τηλεθόωσαι
ἐξείης στιχόωσιν ἐπήτριμοι, **ἃς ὅγ᾽ ἐπιπρό**
θελγομένας φόρμιγγι κατήγαγε Πιερίηθεν.

That song even today is attested by the **wild oaks** that on the coast of Zone, in Thrace, flourish, arranged by serried rows in order: **they are the oaks that with the enchantment of his *phorminx* the poet made move and descend down from Pieria**.

3.4 Verg. *Georg*. 4.471–472

*at **cantu commotae** Erebi de sedibus imis*
*umbrae **ibant** tenues*.

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[17] As Claude Calame (2001: 20) clarifies, μολπή designates the union of dance and song.

[18] We know that this fragment refers to Orpheus from Tzetz. *Chil*. 1.311–318.

But, **stirred by his song**, airy shadows **floated** in from the deepest depths of Erebus.

One can also imagine that Orpheus' capacity of 'putting other beings in motion' or 'making them change place' is further reflected through his attempt at making Eurydike's soul come back to life. Remarkably, this aspect of his mytho-biography is comparable to the destiny of the Ṛbhus. As suggested by Miyakawa,[19] the Ṛbhus were ultimately able 'to change sides' by achieving immortality (cf. 1.6 above and 3.5 below).

3.5 RV 4.33.4d

*tā́bhiḥ śámībhir **amṛtatvám āśuḥ***

They **attained immortality** by these labors.

At the same time, the miracles by means of which they 'attained immortality' seem to be represented as the creation of things that move or turn. In *Rig Veda* 8.75, the Vedic sacrificer asks the fire-god Agni to bow his head for the sacrifice, as 'the Ṛbhus do with the wheel-felly' (3.6). As an inner-Vedic phraseological analysis makes evident, the verb *nam* (3.6) and its compounds *á-nam*, *ní-nam* may denote the submission and consent of a participant in ritual. The verb *ní-nam* has this value in *Rig Veda* 3.33.9ff. (3.7). In this hymn, the poet-priest (Vedic *kārú-*) Viśvāmitra asks the rivers to bend down so as to allow the Bharatas to cross the water-stream.[20]

3.6 RV 8.75.5

táṃ nemím ṛbhávo yathā
á́ namasva *sáhūtibhiḥ*
nédīyo yajñám aṅgiraḥ

As craftsmen [/Ṛbhus] bend the felly, bend here, closer to the sacrifice, with the shared invocations, o Aṅgiras [= Agni].

3.7 RV 3.33.9–10

ó ṣú svasāraḥ kāráve śṛṇota
yayáu vo dūrā́d ánasā ráthena
ní ṣú namadhvam *bhávatā supārā́*

[19] In Melchert 2010 and Jackson [Rova] 2016: 189.
[20] On the Rigvedic hymn cf. Kwella 1973.

adhoakṣā́ḥ sindhavaḥ sroti yā́bhiḥ
ā́ te kāro śr̥ṇavāmā vácāṃsi
yayā́tha dūrā́d ánasā ráthena
***ní** te **naṃsai** pīpi yānéva yóṣā*
máryāyeva kaní yā́ śaśvacái te

[Viśvamitra:] Listen well to the bard, sisters. He has driven to you from afar with his wagon and chariot. **Bow down**; become easy to cross, staying below his axle(s) with your currents, you rivers.
[Rivers:] We will listen to your words, bard. You have driven from afar with wagon and chariot. I [= one river] will bow down to you like a young woman swollen [with milk, to her infant], [while] I [= other river] **will bow to** you like a maiden to her cavalier.

By bowing down or in one direction (Vedic *níl ā́-nam*), the ritual participant allies/collaborates with the poet-priest, since (s)he is persuaded by the poet-priest's powerful word. Significantly, Hittite *ḫarp(p)-*^{mi} ('to change sides, to join someone', as per Melchert 2010), another linguistic cognate of Greek Ὀρφεύς and Vedic *R̥bhú-*, expresses a similar notion within Hittite rituals. In the Neo-Hittite "Ritual of Iriya for the Purification of a City" (CTH 400, 3.8; cf. also the "Ritual for the Purification of a City", CTH 401), rivers and mountains *ḫarp(p)-*, that is, ally/collaborate, with the ritual-performer (3.8), after he asks them to 'side with him'.

3.8 KUB 30.35 + KUB 60.75, Rs. iii (= G) §12, 59–64 (CTH 400)

PÚ.ḪI.A GAL.GAL PÚ.ḪI.A TUR.TU[R] *kuwat uwanun*
kuit dariyanu[*n*]
[…] *nu=mu=šš̆an* [ ] *šumešš=a* ***ḫara***[***pten***]
wete[*n*]*ante*[*š kišan daranzi*?]
lē=tta nāḫi
[*uieš=ta* ***ḫarpuw***(***eni***)]

[He goes to the water and at the spring says thus:] (11) – Fountains great and small [Do you know] why I have come? [Do you know] why I have laboured? […] and you also **be on my side** [lit. **join me**]! And the waters [thus say]: – Do not fe[ar] for yourself: **we will be on your** (**side**) [lit. join you].[21]

The use of Hittite *ḫarp*(*p*)*-*^{mi} in 3.8 is comparable to that of *nam* in *Rig Veda* 8.75 and 3.33 (3.6–3.7): this lexical juxtaposition provides us with an important piece of combinatory evidence for the semantics

[21] I print the text as per *Thesaurus Linguarum Hethaeorum digitalis*, Melzer & Görke (eds), hethiter.net/: CTH 400.1 (Expl. --, 20.04.2017, last accessed 04/12/2024).

of Indo-European *h_3erb^h- and its Greek and Indic nominal derivatives: Ὀρφεύς and *Ṛbhú-*. Both Orpheus and the Ṛbhus are the ones who are capable of making natural elements *side with them* (cf. Hittite *ḫarp(p)-^{mi}*), through 'internal' or 'external' motions.

As already pointed out, the Ṛbhus are said to have created objects or beings that are capable of moving, such as the chariot of the Aśvins, the fallow bay horses of Indra (1.9, above). In this connection, it may be worth noting that the rejuvenation of the Ṛbhus' parents is also described as the restoration of the capacity of moving (Ved. *caráthāya*, 3.9).

3.9 RV 4.36.3cd

***jívrī** yát sántā **pitárā** sanājúrā*
púnar** yúvānā **caráthāya tákṣatha

[It will be proclaimed] that **you fashion** your **parents** as youths for them **to keep going**, even though they were **enfeebled**, worn out by age.

The ability of the Ṛbhus to produce real and metaphorical vehicles may be compared to one of Orpheus' creations. According to Apollonius Rhodius, Orpheus performs an εὐτρόχαλος ἀοιδή to save his companions from the Sirens (3.10).[22] Greek εὐτρόχαλος, 'well-running', 'running on good wheels' or 'well rounded', consists of εὐ° 'good' and a second compound member to τρέχω 'to run', possibly τρόχος 'run' or τροχός 'wheel'. The use of the adjective in Apollonius' *Argonautica* may actually point to a tie between °τρόχαλος and τροχός 'wheel'. Indeed, the epithet also applies to wheeled vehicles (ἅμαξα, 1.845, 2.46, ἀπήνη, 3.889) or round objects (i.e., the 'well-rounded ball', σφαῖρα, 3.135). The idea of a song that 'runs well' or 'goes on good wheels/is well rounded' can be considered a common poetic *topos*, that of the 'song' as a moving vehicle, for which several parallels can be identified in other Indo-European poetic traditions.[23]

3.10 Ap. Rhod. 4.903–909

οἱ δ᾽ ἀπὸ νηός
ἤδη πείσματ᾽ ἔμελλον ἐπ᾽ ἠιόνεσσι βαλέσθαι,

[22] As Calame 2014: 166 points out, Orpheus rescuing the Argo's crew from the Sirens (cf. Ap. Rhod. 4.901–909) may be represented on an early 6th-century BCE black-figure vase in Heidelberg.

[23] Nünlist 1998: 83–125 on the Greek evidence; Massetti 2019: 191–202 on the comparative evidence (Greek and Old Indic).

εἰ μὴ ἄρ᾽ Οἰάγροιο πάις Θρηίκιος Ὀρφεύς
Βιστονίην ἐνὶ χερσὶν ἑαῖς φόρμιγγα τανύσσας
κραιπνὸν **εὐτροχάλοιο** μέλος κανάχησεν **ἀοιδῆς**,
ὄφρ᾽ ἄμυδις κλονέοντος ἐπιβρομέωνται ἀκουαί
κρεγμῷ

Already they were about to cast the cables from their ship onto the beach, had not Thracian Orpheus, Oeagrus' son, strung his Bistonian lyre in his hands and rung out the rapid beat of a **well-rounded** [Race 'lively'] **song**, so that at the same time the men's ears might ring with the sound of his strumming. (transl. Race 2009, modified by the author)

To sum up: Greek Ὀρφεύς can be traced back to Indo-European **h₃erbʰ-* 'to turn, change sides', together with Vedic *Ṛbhú-* and Hittite *ḫarp(p)-mi*. According to the proposed interpretation, Orpheus bears a speaking name, which ultimately reflects the capacity of *moving* (things/people) and/or *making* (things/people) *join a side*. This power of his is comparable to that of poets/seers/ritual performers of ancient India and Anatolia. Finally, both Orpheus and the Ṛbhus are credited with the creation of things that move.

So far, I have focused on the creative and kinetic capacities of Orpheus and the Ṛbhus and my analysis has shown that these figures are associated with the creation of material things. I will now turn to their connection with the building of immaterial things as well as to the relevance of these creations to the attainment of immortality.

4. Fashioning glory in the Orphic gold tables

As pointed out by Jackson Rova (2016, 2023), Indo-Iranian poetic and ritual texts (Rigvedic hymns and Avestan *Gāthās*) and Greek lyric texts of the Late Archaic to Early Classical Age, especially Pindar's *epinicia* and *thrēnoi*, allow us to recover a system of interconnected values concerning what I call here the 'eschatology of the (poetic) glory' (Vedic *śrávas-*, Greek κλέος): immortality is achieved through song in Greece and India (4.1–4.2), while the *Gāthās* repeatedly mention the "House of Praise" (*garō dəmāna-*, 4.3),[24] "not just as a house in (or of) which one sings, but ultimately as a dwelling forged by the poet's song itself" (Jackson [Rova] 2016: 180).

[24] Schwartz 2023 and Schwartz's (forthcoming) contribution in this volume, focusing on the audiovisual architectonic of Yasna 45.3.

4.1 Pind. *Pyth.* 3.111–115

ἐλπίδ᾽ ἔχω κλέος εὑρέσθαι κεν ὑψηλὸν πρόσω.
Νέστορα καὶ Λύκιον Σαρπηδόν᾽, ἀνθρώπων φάτις,
ἐξ **ἐπέων** κελαδεννῶν, **τέκτονες** οἷα σοφοί
ἄρμοσαν, γινώσκομεν· ἁ δ᾽ ἀρετὰ κλεινα῀ς ἀοιδα῀ς
χρονία τελέθει.

I hope that I may win lofty fame hereafter. We know of Nestor and Lycian Sarpedon, still the talk of men, from such echoing **verses** as wise **fashioners joined together**. Excellence endures in glorious songs for a long time.

4.2 RV 1.164.23

yád gāyatré ádhi gāyatrám āhitaṃ
traíṣṭubhād vā ***traíṣṭubhaṃ nirátakṣata***
yád vā jágaj jágaty āhitam padáṃ
yá ít tád vidús té amṛtatvám ānaśuḥ

How the gāyatrī [track] [= gāyatrī line] is based upon a gāyatrī [hymn] or **how a triṣṭubh** [track] [= triṣṭubh line] **was fashioned** out of a triṣṭubh [hymn], or how the jagat track [= jagatī line] is based on the jagat [= jagatī] [hymn] – only **those who know this have reached immortality**.

4.3 Y. 50.4

xšaϑrācā yā *īšō stå̊ŋhaṯ ā paiϑī*
ākå̊ arədrāŋg ***dəmānē garō səraošānē***

And with the power by which [one truthful] puts refreshments on the path toward the efficient ones, **I wish to be heard in the house of praise**.

In addition, the centrality of glory during men's lives and afterwards allows us to explain some crucial aspects of the 'Orphic Gold Tablets'. These are poetic texts engraved on golden *lamellae* mostly found in Magna Graecia and dated between the 5th and 3rd centuries BCE, which, like other "instructions/gifts for/to (or from) the afterlife", were ascribed to Orpheus. In some of the Gold Tablets (e.g. 4.4), the ritual adepts are invited to drink fresh water from the Lake of Memory.[25] Only after drinking will they be able to tread the holy path (ἱεράν [sc. ὁδόν]) in glory (κλεεινοί).

[25] On the Afterlife landscape featuring the "Lake of Memory" cf. Lincoln 1982.

4.4 Gold Tablet from Hipponion (4th century BCE) ll. 11–16[26]

δίψαι δ᾽ εἰμ᾽ αὖος καὶ ἀπόλλυμαι· ἀλ<λ>ὰ δότ᾽ ὦκα
ψυχρὸν ὕδωρ πιέναι **τῆς Μνημοσύνης** ἀπὸ λίμ<ν>ης.
καὶ δή τοι ἐρέουσιν {ι}ὑποχθονίωι βασιλεί<αι>·
καὶ {δή τοι} δώσουσι πιεῖν **τᾶς Μναμοσύνας ἀπ**[ὸ] **λίμνας**
καὶ δὴ καὶ σὺ πιὼν **ὁδὸν ἔρχεα<ι>** ἄν τε καὶ ἄλλοι
μύσται καὶ βάκχοι ἱερὰν **στείχουσι κλε<ε>ινοί.**

"I am parched with thirst and am perishing, but quickly grant me **cold water** from the Lake **of Memory** to drink." And they will announce you to the Chthonian Queen, and they will grant you to drink **from the Lake of Memory**. And you, too, having drunk, will **go along the** sacred **road** on which other initiates and bacchoi **tread in glory**.

As noted by Faraone (2002), the phraseology of some of the Gold Tablets, like the one quoted above (4.4), is reminiscent of that found in the final verses of Pindar's *Isthmian Six* (4.5), in which the poet declares that he will drink the water of Mnemosyne's daughters. Elsewhere, the performers of songs are imagined as pouring out their voice (4.6)[27] or, directly, as fashioning poetic drinks (4.7). In addition, Pindaric images concerning the fashioning of poetic glory (4.1 above) may be echoed by Orphic references to the *glorious* path (στείχουσι κλε<ε>ινοί), which Orphic adepts tread once they drink the water of Mnemosyne. Furthermore, not only does the poet say that he will drink the water of Mnemosyne's daughters but he also affirms that he will offer poured nectar, i.e. a drink of immortality (4.8), to his *laudandus*. In other words, the poet, who possesses the gift of memory, fashions, in the guise of a choral performance, a metaphorical drink of immortality to his *laudandus*. We may conclude that the poet is a fashioner of words and of poetic drinks.[28]

4.5 Pind. *Isth*. 6.74–75

πίσω σφε Δίρκας **ἁγνὸν** ὕ-
δωρ, τὸ βαθύζωνοι **κόραι**
χρυσοπέπλου **Μναμοσύνας** ἀνέτει-
λαν παρ᾽ εὐτειχέσιν Κάδμου πύλαις

[26] I print the text as according to Bernabé & Jiménez San Cristóbal's (2008) edition. The provided translation is my own.

[27] On the phraseology [to POUR–WORDS/PRAYERS] cf. Kurke 1989; Dardano 2018.

[28] All these metaphors have Indo-European comparanda. Cf. Massetti 2024; Ginevra 2020: 73ff.

I **will drink** the **holy water** of the Dirke, which the deep-girded **daughters** of the gold-clad **Mnemosyne** have sent up at the well-walled gates of Cadmus [= in Thebes].

4.6 Pind. *Pyth*. 10.55–59

ἔλπομαι δ᾽ Ἐφυραίων
ὄπ᾽ ἀμφὶ Πηνεϊὸν **γλυκεῖαν προχεόντων** ἐμὰν
τὸν Ἱπποκλέαν ἔτι καὶ μᾶλλον σὺν ἀοιδαῖς
ἔκατι στεφάνων θαητὸν ἐν ἄλιξι θησέμεν ἐν καὶ παλαιτέροις,
νέαισίν τε παρθένοισι μέλημα

And I hope that, while the Ephyreans **pour forth my sweet voice** beside the Peneius, with my songs I will make Hippocleas even more admired for his garlands by boys his age and by his elders, and I will make the girls think of him.

4.7 Pind. *Nem*. 3.4–7

μένοντ᾽ ἐπ᾽ Ἀσωπίῳ μελιγαρύων **τέκτονες**
κώμων νεανίαι, σέθεν ὄπα μαιόμενοι
διψῇ δὲ πρᾶγος ἄλλο μὲν ἄλλου,
ἀεθλονικία δὲ μάλιστ᾽ **ἀοιδὰν φιλεῖ**

For by the Asopian water are waiting **the fashioners of honey-voiced revels**, young men who seek your voice. Different deeds **thirst** for different things, but **victory in the games loves song** most of all.

4.8 Pind. *Ol*. 7.7–8

καὶ **ἐγὼ νέκταρ χυτόν**, **Μοισᾶν δόσιν**, ἀεθλοφόροις
ἀνδράσιν **πέμπων**, γλυκὺν καρπὸν φρενός

So, I also **send poured nectar**, **the gift of the Muses**, to the men who carry off the prize [the gift of the Muses], a sweet fruit of the spirit.

Certainly, the anonymous ritual adepts of the so-called 'Orphic Gold Tablets' are not Pindar's wealthy and powerful *laudandi*. They did not become objects of the 'speech of men' because a poet like Pindar celebrated them in front of an audience. However, thanks to the ritual and poetic legacy of Orpheus, the grandson of Mnemosyne and poet par excellence, they partake in poetic memory, so as to proceed along the holy path of glory. Once again, Orpheus is given credit for making his ritual adepts 'change sides', as he makes their condition change for the

better: instead of being innerly motionless and anonymous shadows, they achieve poetic glory and become glorious, like celebrated heroes.[29] In the light of all this, Orphic ritual texts may be considered as texts of a cult in which the *teletai* achieve immortality with the aid of poetry: the verses that instructed the adepts on how to drink from the lake of Mnemosyne were believed to have been *fashioned* by Orpheus. At the same time, the texts are poetic in nature, most of them consisting of hexameters: as the adepts pronounce the poetic instruction, they fashion glory for themselves in the afterlife, just like poets do for themselves and their patrons. For all these reasons, the fabrication of verses, which are occasionally identified as a liquid substance, features as a fundamental means to *fashion* glory in life and in the afterlife.

5. What did the Ṛbhus fashion?

Images of poetic drinks linked to the Orphic cult and to Pindar's encomiastic poetry can be further connected with the main creations of the Ṛbhus. Indeed, as Joel Brereton (2012) showed, the Ṛbhus' miracles seem to "encode the acts of the soma ritual, and, more especially, the acts of the third soma pressing", which the gods are said to "have made with their good labor" (cf. 5.1). In particular, the four cups created by the Ṛbhus correspond to the four main soma recipients in the third pressing; the fabrication of the chariot may hint at the shaping of the sacrifice, as sacrifice is often compared to a chariot in the *Rig Veda* (Sparreboom 1985: 13); the fashioning of Indra's horses may be connected to the *yajñapuccha* ('tail of the sacrifice'), at the opening of which Indra's horses are invoked to leave the ground; the cow-miracle might allude to the image of *milk*, a substance that soma resembles; the rejuvenation of the Ṛbhus' parents may be associated with the Aśvins or to the fertilization of the sacrificer and his wife by means of the third pressing.

5.1 RV 4.35.9ab

yát ***tṛtī́yaṃ sávanaṃ*** *ratnadhéyam*
ákṛṇudhvaṃ svapasyā́ *suhastāḥ*

[29] On the phraseology making reference to the initiated as 'hero' in Tablets L2–L3, see Bernabé & Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008: 20. On the 'social life' of heroes as opposed to that of the dead cf. Ginevra's (forthcoming b) chapter in this volume.

> **The Third Pressing**, the conferring of treasure, **which you made by your good labor**, o you of skillful hands.

In this regard, it may be significant that a passage from the Young Avestan *Hōm Yašt*, Yasna 10, a ritual text celebrating the *haoma* (the exhilarating substance of Zoroastrian ritual), may provide the missing link between 'fashioning' and the fabrication of the inebriating ritual drink. Within the exaltation of *haoma*, *haoma* is said to have been fashioned (YAv. *taš* = Ved. *takṣ*) by a good-worker (5.2), YAv. *huuāpah-* is a word built with the same lexical material as Vedic *svapas-yā́-* (cf. 5.1, above). The passage seems to be in a complementary relationship to the Vedic passages about the Ṛbhus and thus indirectly confirms the hypothesis that the Ṛbhus played an important role in one of the soma pressings. Yasna 10.10 thus allows us to project the theme of the 'fashioner of the ritual drink' at an Indo-Iranian level. More specifically, in the *Rig Veda* the Ṛbhus' work is constantly described by means of Vedic *takṣ*, which may hint at the construction of the different 'components' of the Third Pressing (cf., e.g. 1.9, above). However, the shaping of the sacrifice or the soma, all together, is not commonly described by means of *takṣ* (cf., e.g. 5.1). Conversely, Yasna 10.10 does not mention the Ṛbhu(s) as the inventors of the *haoma*. Even so, the creation of the *haoma* is described by means of Avestan *taš*, i.e. the Young Avestan counterpart of what is the Ṛbhus' 'favourite verb' in Vedic.

5.2 Y 10.10

> *auruuaṇtəm* ***θβā*** *dāmiθātəm*
> *baγō* ***tatašaṯ huuāpå̊***

> **The Good-labourer fashioned you** [sc. *haoma*], the hero constructed by the creator.

To sum up: it is likely that the Ṛbhus were *fashioners of ritual drinks and ritual formulations*, which allow poet-priests and patrons to achieve prosperity and, possibly, immortality. It is through the production of this ritual that the Ṛbhus achieved immortality and came to be mythologized as *divine fashioners* of things: objects (chariot, horses; cf. 1.9, above), abstract things ('youthful vigour'; see 5.4 below) and formulations (see 2.1 above). The fashioning of 'ritual actions' overlaps with the fashioning of 'words' because words are concomitant to ritual actions. As a matter of fact, the thirst for soma and the need of praise are said to be satisfied simultaneously (5.3).

5.3 RV 4.34.11ab

nā́pābhūta ***nā́*** *vo* ***atītṛ̥sāma***
ániḥśastā ṛ̥bhavo *yajñé asmín*

You have not kept away. **We have not let you be thirsty, O Ṛ̥bhus, nor are you unpraised** in this sacrifice.

It is, therefore, by fashioning ritual drinks and ritual formulations that the Ṛ̥bhus 'changed sides' and moved from mortality to immortality. When the poet-priest *fashions* a hymn for them, he, together with his patron, has the chance to 'change sides' by achieving poetic glory and prosperity in this life and the one hereafter. Remarkably, the Ṛ̥bhus are explicitly invoked to *fashion* immaterial objects for the sacrificers: fresh energy, prosperity and fame. The construction of these very immaterial things can be identified as one of the leitmotifs of *Rig Veda* 4.36, a hymn to the Ṛ̥bhus, the text of which is presented below (5.4).

5.4 RV 4.36

1 *anaśvó jātó anabhīśúr ukthi̯o, ráthas tricakráḥ pári vartate rájaḥ*
mahát tád vo devi̯asya pravā́canaṃ, dyā́m ṛ̥bhavaḥ pṛ̥thivī́ṃ yác ca púṣyatha
2 *ráthaṃ yé cakrúḥ suvṛ̥taṃ sucétaso, ávihvarantam mánasas pári dhyáyā*
tā́ṁ ū nu asyá sávanasya pītáya, ā́ vo vājā ṛ̥bhavo vedayāmasi
3 *tád vo vājā ṛ̥bhavaḥ supravācanáṃ, devéṣu vibhvo abhavan mahitvanám*
jívrī yát sántā ***pitárā*** *sanājúrā,* ***púnar yúvānā caráthāya takṣatha***
4 *ékaṃ ví cakra camasáṃ cáturvayaṃ, níś cármaṇo gā́m ariṇīta dhītíbhiḥ*
áthā devéṣu amṛ̥tatvám ānaśa, śruṣṭī́ vājā ṛ̥bhavas tád va ukthi̯am
5 *ṛ̥bhutó* ***rayíḥ*** *prathamáśravastamo, vā́ja****śrutāso*** *yám ájījanan náraḥ*
*vibhva****taṣṭó*** *vidátheṣu pravā́ci̯o, yáṃ devāso ávathā sá vícarṣaṇiḥ*
6 *sá vājī́ árvā sá ṛ́ṣir vacasyáyā, sá śū́ro ástā pṛ́tanāsu duṣṭáraḥ*
sá rā́yas *póṣaṃ sá suvī́ri̯aṃ dadhe, yáṃ vā́jo víbhvāṁ ṛ̥bhávo yám ā́viṣuḥ*
7 *śréṣṭhaṃ vaḥ péśo ádhi dhāyi darśatáṃ, stómo vājā ṛ̥bhavas táṃ jujuṣṭana*
dhī́rāso hí ṣṭhā́ kaváyo vipaścítas, tā́n va enā́ bráhmaṇā vedayāmasi
8 *yūyám asmábhyaṃ dhiṣáṇābhi̯as pári, vidvā́ṃso víśvā nári̯yāṇi bhójanā*
dyumántaṃ vā́jaṃ vṛ̥ṣaśuṣmam uttamám, ā́ no ***rayím*** *ṛ̥bhavas* ***takṣatā́*** ***váyaḥ***
9 *ihá prajā́m ihá* ***rayím*** *rárāṇā, ihá* ***śrávo*** *vīrávat* ***takṣatā*** *naḥ*
yéna vayáṃ citáyemā́ti anyā́n, táṃ vā́jaṃ citrám ṛ̥bhavo dadā naḥ

1. Produced without horse and rein, the praiseworthy chariot with its three wheels rolls through the airy space. This is the great proclamation of your divinity: that you prosper heaven and earth, o Ṛ̥bhus.
2. The very perceptive ones who made from mind by insight the smooth-running chariot, which never overturns – [to you,] o Vājas, o Ṛ̥bhus, we now dedicate [the soma] of this pressing for you to drink.

3. Your greatness became well proclaimed among the gods, O Vājas, Ṛbhus, and Vibhūs: that **you fashion your parents as youths for them to keep going,** even though they were enfeebled, worn out by age.
4. You divided the single cup into four; out of a cowhide you made a cow to flow [milk] by your insights. So then you attained immortality among the gods by your obedience, o Vājas, Ṛbhus: that is your praiseworthy [attainment].
5. From the Ṛbhus comes **wealth** that best brings the foremost **fame,** which the men **famed** as Vājas have produced, that **is fashioned** by the Vibhvan, that is to be proclaimed at the ritual distributions. Whom you help, o gods, he has wide boundaries.
6. He is a prizewinning charger; he a seer through his verbal artfulness; he a champion, an archer, who is difficult to overcome in battles; he has received an increase **of his wealth** and he an abundance of good heroes – he, whom Vāja and Vibhvan, whom the Ṛbhus have helped.
7. An excellent, beautiful robe has been placed upon you: [this] song of praise, o Vājas, Ṛbhus. Take pleasure in it! Because you are insightful poets perceiving inspired words, we dedicate [it] to you with this formulation.
8. You who know all the things that nourish men, for us [fashion] from the Holy Places [= the ritual ground] the highest heavenly prize that brings the explosiveness of a bull; **fashion** for us **wealth** and **vitality,** o Ṛbhus.
9. Giving offspring here and **wealth** here, **fashion** here for us the **fame** that heroes accompany. The bright prize by which we would be brilliant beyond others, o Ṛbhus, have you given to us.

The hymn is programmatically defined as the "great proclamation of the divinity" of the gods (1c); their "greatness became well proclaimed among the gods" (3ab); and the Ṛbhus are said to have "attained immortality among the gods" (4c). All in all, the first part of the text (stanzas 1–4) emphasizes the divine status of the Ṛbhus, which they earned through their labours.

At the same time, the proclamation of the Ṛbhus' divine power consists in a celebration of their main skill: *fashioning*. The repetitions of the Vedic root *takṣ* are combined in a circular structure, we may call a '*takṣ*-composition' (a ring composition consisting in the repetitions of the root *takṣ*): the Ṛbhus *fashioned* (*takṣ*) their parents into youths 'to keep going' (3d); fame-bringing (*śrávas-*) wealth (*rayí-*) is said to be *fashioned* (*takṣ*) by Vibhvan, one of the three Ṛbhus (5ac), and, in the two last stanzas of the hymn, the Ṛbhus are invoked to *fashion* (*takṣ*) wealth, fresh energy and glory (*rayí-*, *váyas-* and *śrávas-*, 8–9).[30]

[30] Besides echoing Pindar's closing words in *Pythian Three*, in which ἐπέων […] τέκτονες (Pind. *Pyth.* 3.113) are surrounded by references to 'glory' (ἐλπίδ᾽ ἔχω

Since they are fashioners of ritual drinks and of holy formulations as well as fame, which provides immortality, we can conclude that the Ṛbhus resemble Orpheus.

6. Conclusions: to the afterlife, through poetic drinks

In this chapter I have tried to highlight common traits between Greek Ὀρφεύς and Vedic *Ṛbhú-*. I hope to have managed to show that the similarities which one can identify between these figures go beyond the level of pure linguistic reconstruction. In particular:

- I argue for considering Greek Ὀρφεύς and Vedic *Ṛbhú-* as speaking names (or appellatives) that can be traced back to PIE *$*h_3erb^h$-* 'to join, ally, change sides, side with'.
- The capacity 'to join, ally, change sides, side with' is expressed in Hittite by means of another *$*h_3erb^h$-* derivative, which, in ritual texts, applies to the power of the poet-priest, who makes the natural elements side with him.
- At the same time, Orpheus and the Ṛbhus share some mytho-biographical achievements and qualities: they are associated with the creation of material things and poetic words.
- Moreover, they are capable of displacing things, making things move, or creating movable objects.
- On the other hand, Orpheus and the Ṛbhus are the ones, who, par excellence *changed sides*: the Ṛbhus are said to have achieved immortality thanks to their creations. The same may apply to Orpheus, who happens to be the *only* hero who travelled into the underworld and is a poet. Furthermore, his head survives Dionysiac dismemberment. It is probably thanks to his poetic skills that Orpheus' poetic and ritual legacy survives within the Greek tradition and Orpheus emerges as fame-named (ὀνομάκλυτος).
- Finally, I propose that the inventions that allowed Orpheus and Ṛbhus to achieve immortality and are provided to the ritual adepts (namely, the Orphic adepts and the sacrificers of the

κλέος εὑρέσθαι κεν ὑψηλὸν πρόσω "I hope that I may win lofty fame hereafter", Pind. *Pyth*. 3.111; ἀ δ' ἀρετὰ κλειναῖς ἀοιδαῖς || χρονία τελέθει "excellence endures in glorious songs for a long time", Pind. *Pyth*. 3.114–115), the collocation [to FASHION–FAME] has a Greek perfect match: the man's name Κλεοτέκτων (IG II^2 6014, 3rd century BCE); cf. Massetti forthcoming.

> Vedic ritual) are connected with (1) the *fashioning of poetic glory*, which grants immortality to the poet and the ritual adept, and (2) the fashioning of a ritual in which metaphoric and/or concrete drinking plays a significant role.

I hope to have contributed, through my chapter, towards shedding light on some important figures of the Greek and Vedic traditions, who are tightly connected with the technology and the eschatology of glory-through-poetry.

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5. Indo-European motifs in the Greek underworlds

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Abstract

In this chapter, I examine the Indo-European legacy of the underworld in ancient Greece. The Indo-Europeans did not know of a land beneath the earth nor did they have a standardised concept of the underworld. Nevertheless, several Greek underworld motifs did originate from the Indo-European heritage. These include the idea of a journey to the hereafter, a river marking the border between this world and the next, a guardian dog, a kind of palace with strong gates and a beautiful meadow. However, Orphic poets sometimes turned ancient motifs into their opposite.

1. Introduction

Can we say anything about Indo-European motifs in Greek conceptions of the underworld? The question may not look very promising, as we do not have many studies that would help us to find our way. Admittedly, there are plenty of contributions on the Greek underworld, on Homer in particular. The latter's descriptions, especially in the *Odyssey*, have proved to be an inexhaustible source for contributions on its real and supposed contradictions. From Erwin Rohde's (1845–1898) famous *Psyche* (1894) to the greatest Hellenists of my time, Martin West (1937–2015) and Walter Burkert (1931–2015), scholars have tried to find their way in the jungle of opinions, both of Homer and of modern scholars. However, there has been little interest in possible Indo-European roots. The "Oriental turn", as initiated by Burkert (1992) and continued by West (1997), directed the interest of students of the afterlife to the East Face of Helikon, to quote the title

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of a famous book by West, that is, to the world of Gilgamesh and other Akkadian poems and epics, such as the *Atrahasis*, instead of to possible roots of Greek concepts.[1] Admittedly, Martin West (2007) turned to Indo-European myth and poetry in a later book, but this study has had remarkably little influence in Greek studies. The most recent studies of the Homeric ideas about the afterlife do not even pay attention to a possible Indo-European heritage (Matijević 2015; Gazis 2018; Lye 2024; Sekita 2024). Yet, given West's unique position, I will use his book as a kind of guide but also as a collection of studies in which the Greek evidence, rather surprisingly, does not always play the important role we would have expected from this eminent Hellenist, even though he has of course noted the most obvious passages.

2. Casting lots

Let us start with the fact that this interest in Mesopotamian literature has turned up a motif regarding the underworld that is not mentioned in earlier studies of the Greek underworld. As Burkert notes, the beginning of *Atrahasis*, an Akkadian epic first published only in 1969, relates that the three main gods of the pantheon 'grasped the flask of lots by the neck, they cast the lots; the gods made the division: Anu went up to heaven, Enlil took the earth, for his subjects, and the bolts, the bars of the sea were set for Enki, the far-sighted'. This passage, as Burkert notes, has a surprising resemblance to words of Poseidon in the *Iliad*: "For when we threw the lots I received the grey sea as my permanent abode, Hades drew the murky darkness, Zeus, however, drew the wide sky of brightness and clouds; the earth is common to all and spacious Olympus."[2] Burkert points out that the combination heaven-sea-underworld is unique to this passage and the triad of gods of this passage is not worshipped anywhere in the Greek world. And indeed, when we look at the Indo-European evidence, we frequently find the pair 'Sky (Heaven) and Earth' (West 2007: 181–183; Olsen 2021; García Ramón 2023), but the underworld and the sea are not part of it. In fact, there is no Indo-European evidence of a land below the earth as we find it conceptualised and imagined in Greek religion and mythology. In other words, the Homeric poet had adopted, probably indirectly,

[1] For possible Egyptian influence, see Drew Griffith 2008.

[2] *Il.* XV.184–199; cf. Burkert 1992: 88–93, for the dependence of this passage on the Akkadian epic *Atrahasis*, but note the reservations of West 1997: 110.

the beginning of *Atrahasis* because it suited his own ideas of the world of the dead, which may well have been influenced by Mesopotamian literature, such as the Gilgamesh epic.

On the other hand, we know that dividing property among brothers by lots was not unusual in Greek mythology. Odysseus mentions the custom in one of his fictitious tales (*Od.* 14.208–14.209),[3] and we find it also in the myth of the Heraclids, the myth that legitimated the territorial claim of the Spartans in the Peloponnesus. Herodotus (6.52) apparently suggests that the story was a part of epic poetry, although he clearly does not know of any particular poet. In any case, tradition seems to have told how the Heraclids conquered the Peloponnese and then divided the area between them by casting lots, which Euripides recounts in different ways in his tragedies.[4] In the *Temenidai*, Oxylus divides the Peloponnese into three parts, with the eldest son, Temenos, receiving the best part (the Argolid), Kresphontes receiving Messenia, and the sons of Aristodemus receiving Sparta. In the *Temenos*, however, Kresphontes gets Messenia by lot and the sons of Aristodemus get Sparta. The procedure cannot have been unusual, as we also hear of casting of lots over Argos by the three sons of Phoroneus (Hellanikos *FGrH* 4 F 36 = 36 Fowler: Demont 2000: 309–315). In fact, this division by lots would have a long life and could still be found in modern Greece until recent times.[5] Burkert does not mention the Greek parallels, but they are clearly old and might help to explain why the Homeric poet was attracted to this theme of the *Atrahasis*, as the custom of throwing lots must have been familiar to him.

3. Sceptics and euphemisms

Given, then, that the passage fitted into the Greek way of thinking and living, it also directs our attention to the fact that a world of the dead as a separate world below that of the living does not seem to have been an Indo-European concept. That does not mean that the Indo-Europeans did not have ideas about life after death. However, we have to consider the possibility that ancient motifs survived in different contexts. That becomes more likely when we realise that we have a variety of sources regarding early Greek beliefs, much more than for

[3] See also Stesichorus fr. 222 (b). 220ff, ed. Finglass, cf. Bremer, van Erp Taalman Kip and Slings 1987: 167–168; Apollodorus 2.8.4; Gebler 2024: 132–137.

[4] See Harder 1991: 117–135, whose reconstruction of the two plays I follow here.

[5] Levy 1956; Friedl 1962: 60–64; Herzfeld 1980.

any other Indo-European tradition. As I have noted in a contribution on Indo-European initiation (Bremmer 2024), the Greek evidence is often overlooked by people starting from Indo-Iranian traditions. Yet we can also immediately say that the more sources we have, the more we can see that there was no canonical thought about life after death. How could there have been? Among the Indo-Europeans, there was no professional priesthood or a holy book to tell people what to believe. All there might have been were travelling poets – bards, if you like – who might well have put forward different ideas.

We cannot even know whether there were sceptics of the kind we hear of in fifth-century Athens, where the author of the Derveni Papyrus complains that people do not fear the terrors of Hades (§14 Kotwick). He might not have been an outlier in his opinion, as a character in Euripides' *Meleagros* (F 532 Kannicht) states that 'after death every man is earth and shadow: nothing goes to nothing'. We also find a reflection of this scepticism in Plato's *Republic* (330–331), where Kephalos says to Socrates:

> [W]hen a man begins to realise that he is going to die, he is filled with anxiety and concern about matters that did not occur to him before. The tales that are told of the world below and how the men who have done wrong here must pay the penalty there, though he may have laughed them off before, then begin to torment his soul with the doubt that there may be some truth in them.

In short, by all accounts we can only be sceptical about our full knowledge of the ideas about the fate of mortals after death.

Our knowledge of Greek ideas is also hindered by the average Greek's preference for using euphemisms rather than explicit descriptions of what awaited them in the afterlife. Thus, Persephone was referred to as the 'daughter of Demeter' rather than by her own name;[6] indeed, Plato (*Cratylus* 404CD) notes that 'many people' are in awe of the name Pherephatta.[7] We even find such a euphemism in the *Odyssey*, where Heracles tells Odysseus about the Athenian king Eurystheus: "and once he sent me here to fetch the dog, since he could not think of any more difficult labour for me. I took him and led him out of Hades, and Hermes and the owl-eyed Athena accompanied me" (*Odyssey*.

[6] For the expression, see Euripides, *Helen* 1306–1307 with Kannicht *ad loc.* and F 63; Carcinus *TrGF* 70 F 5.1; Henrichs 1991: 178–181; Voutiras 1999.

[7] For this and other examples, see Bremmer 2019: 199.

11.621–11.626; see also *Iliad* VIII.362–369).[8] What strikes us here is that the dog is nameless, whereas from Hesiod onwards it was almost unanimously agreed that it was Cerberus, the watchdog of the underworld (see below).[9] The example shows that there is no fixed rule but that we must be aware of the fact that the underworld was not always spoken of in clear terms.

4. Indo-European motifs

Let us now turn to motifs that might be of Indo-European origin. We will start with the fact that for the Indo-Europeans death and sleep were closely connected. As West notes, "'[s]leep', 'the eternal sleep', 'the sleep of death', etc., is widely used as a poetic metaphor or euphemism for death". He presents examples from the *Rig Veda* where 'put to sleep' is four times used of putting to death. For Lucretius, he notes that the dead man is *leto sopitus* (3.904, cf. 920–921, 466, Catullus 5.6, etc.), although he omits Verg. *Aen*. 6.278 *consanguineus Leti Sopor* (imitated by Val. Flacc. *Arg*. 8.74), and for Anglo-Saxon *deaðes swefn*, 'the sleep of death' (*Genesis B* 720). For ancient Greece, West notes that in the *Iliad* a slain warrior κοιμήσατο χάλκεον ὕπνον, 'fell into the bronze sleep' (XI. 241), whereas another simply εὕδει, 'sleeps' (XIV.482). However, he fails to mention that in Greek mythology Sleep is the brother of Death.[10]

West (2007: 388) also notes that the Indo-Europeans spoke of a journey to the underworld from which there would be no return. Unfortunately, he did not annotate this idea properly, but Circe says about Odysseus' comrades: "Rash men, who have gone down alive to the house of Hades to meet death twice, when the other mortals die only once" (*Od*. 11.21–11.22: σχέτλιοι, οἳ ζώοντες ὑπήλθετε δῶμ᾽ Ἀίδαο, δισθανέες, ὅτε τ᾽ ἄλλοι ἅπαξ θνήσκουσ᾽ ἄνθρωποι). In fifth-century Athens, according to tragedy, the souls of the dead were believed to have to travel some distance, as in the *Ajax*, nowadays to be dated to the 440s just like the *Antigone* (Finglass 2011: 1–11), the protagonist says: "For I will go to that place where I must travel" (690) and

[8] For Heracles' descent, see Dova 2012: 71–84.

[9] But note Critias *TrGF* 43 F1: Ἄιδου κύνα.

[10] West 2007: 387–388, but see *Iliad* XIV.231, XVI.454; Hesiod, *Theogony* 212, 756 (with West *ad loc*.); Mainoldi 1987; Shapiro 1993: 132–165; Bažant 1994; Wöhrle 1995: 24–35; Mintsi 1997; Hunnink 1999; Kocziszky 2019.

Antigone, too, uses the word 'travel' (*poreuô*) with reference to her descent into the underworld (891–893).[11]

When the dead travel, they arrive at the edge of the world of the living, which is marked by a river or even a number of rivers. It seems typical of Greece that we hear that it is impossible to cross the river if one has not been properly buried (*Il.* XXIII.71–74; see also *Od.* 11.66, 72–73). In other words, we have here an interesting combination of myth and ritual or, perhaps better, beliefs and ritual, which seems quite unique for the early period. In the passage, the famous dream visit of Achilles by Patroclus, the river is not mentioned by name. It may well be that we have here another example of the euphemistic trend I have just mentioned. Later authors, such as Porphyry (F 377 Smith), identified the river in Achilles' dream as the Acheron, but that is not necessary, the less so as the infernal rivers are rarely mentioned by name in Homer (but see *Od.* 10.513–10.514), although the Acheron is already noted as an infernal river by Sappho and others.[12] In fact, there is only one passage in which all four rivers of the underworld – Acheron, Pyriphlegethon, Cocytus and Styx – are mentioned (*Od.* 10.513–10.515). The most famous infernal river is probably the Styx (Bremmer 2025), which is also mentioned as the boundary between the world of the living and the underworld in a less commented-upon passage, in which Athena refers to Heracles' descent into the underworld to fetch Cerberus (*Il.* VIII.366–369). What seems typical of the Greek infernal rivers is that they are described as being full of whirlpools, raging (Pind. fr. 129 Maehler) and making lots of noise – presumably to make them more terrifying. In other words, they reflect the state of the rivers in the winter, but not those in the summer, when most rivers would have been reduced to small streams of water (Suárez de la Torre 2019; Falbo 2022a, 2023).

Such a horrendous river cannot be crossed without help. It is therefore not surprising that many Indo-European traditions know of a ferryman (never a ferrywoman) of the dead, as do several other eschatological traditions, as in Sumer and Egypt (Matijević 2015: 52). West records several traditions, with special attention to the Slavic and Baltic ones. Our oldest Greek source mentioning the ferryman with the name Charon, the late archaic or early classical epic *Minyas* (fr. 1 Davies/

[11] See also Aristophanes, *Ranae* 109–118; Chaniotis 2000: 63–64.

[12] *Odyssey* 10.513–10.514; Sappho, fr. 95.11–95.13 Voigt, cf. D'Alessio, 2022; Alcaeus, fr. 38a. 2–3,8 Voigt; Aeschylus, *Septem* 856.

Bernabé), which is a lost Boeotian epic perhaps dating from the early fifth century (Debiasi 2010: 266–279), pictures him as an old man, an image still followed by Vergil in his *Aeneid* (6.299). However, not every Indo-European tradition knew of a ferryman. The Greek evidence is hardly early, and the Romans had no independent tradition either (Wagenvoort 1956: 102–131). Instead of a ferryman, the Iranians had the famous Cinvat Bridge, which already appears in the *Gathas* of the *Avesta* (Yasna 46.10, 46.11, 51.13) and is evidently very old (Tafazzoli 1992). From Iran, this bridge even found its way into the Christian Apocalypses, probably via Jewish sources.[13] From there it may have also entered other, later Christian traditions. West notes that an old north English (= Yorkshire) song sung at wakes referred to "the bridge of dread, no brader than a thread", but he gives no source, probably because his own source, the *Deutsche Mythologie* of the Brothers Grimm, was too abbreviated at this point.[14] Other traditions are certainly much later and in the Slavic and Baltic countries already influenced by Christianity. Bruce Lincoln has argued that the old age of Charon is a typical feature of Indo-European origin. and speculates that the old age of the ferryman personifies the fact that life ebbs away in old age.[15] However, there seems to be no evidence for this. It is rather that youth would be out of place in an area characterised by gloom, misery and darkness. In any case, the Indo-Europeans clearly did not have a uniform tradition about the crossing. People had to get to the other side, so to speak, but they must have imagined various ways of doing so, perhaps depending on the local ecology.

When people got to the other side, what did they see? I would like to draw our attention to three important ancient features. First, the entrance to the underworld was guarded. Apparently, people imagined it as a kind of house or palace which, presumably, in real life was also guarded by an animal. In Homer, as we have seen, this animal was a dog, who still remains anonymous (*Il.* VIII.368, *Od.* 11.623), but in later literature, as said, was called Cerberus. It is perhaps somewhat difficult to imagine him as terrifying in our times of poodles and golden retrievers, but Servius' (pseudo-)etymology of Cerberus as

[13] Jewish: Philonenko 1994; García Martínez 2007: 2.230. Christian: Bremmer 2018. In general: de Jong 2010.

[14] But see Thoms 1839: 89–91 (with an early reference to the Cinvat Bridge), quoted by Grimm 1876: 696.

[15] West 2007: 389–390; Lincoln 1980, reprinted in Lincoln 1991: 62–75. More generally: Grinsell 1957.

kreo-boros, 'meat devouring' (in *Aen.* 6.395), suggests that we should not take him too lightly. The mention of dogs on the battlefield in the *Iliad* right at the beginning of the poem, where it is said that the anger of Achilles drove many steadfast lives down to Hades and made their bodies prizes for dogs and for all birds, should make us realise that the early Greeks did not think of dogs as just nice pets. They are more like the dogs in the *Edda*, which are scavengers of warriors' corpses. Nevertheless, according to Hesiod (*Th.* 769–773), Cerberus welcomes new arrivals in a very friendly manner but devours those who try to escape from the underworld.

In the *Avesta* (*Vd.* 13.9,19.30), we hear of two dogs guarding the Cinvat Bridge, and in the *Vedas* Yama's two dogs guard the way to the other world and seize the dead.[16] It seems therefore that the Indo-Europeans originally thought of two dogs at the entrance to the other world. Greece – but also Nordic mythology, where Odin meets a dog standing on the road to Hel (*Baldrs draumar* 2.7–3.4) – seems to have reduced this duo to only one dog. Interestingly, however, Greek tradition was clearly not satisfied with a single dog but gave Cerberus two, three or even more heads (Woodford and Spier 1992). In other words, even the single dog counted for at least two. In this connection, we must also mention the Pythagorean expression 'dogs of Persephone' (Aristotle, fr. 159 Gigon), which may well have served as a kind of Cerberus (Riedweg 2021: 64). I therefore assume that the Indo-European tradition originally had two dogs at the entrance, a number that was varied by later traditions.

Once the dogs had been safely passed, it became possible to enter the 'house of Hades' by passing through its gates. In the *Iliad*, the latter action is twice equivalent to 'to die' (V.646, XXIII.71; Theognis 1.427). It is no pleasure to enter the 'gates of Hades', as they are clearly seen as something awful (*Il.* IX.312, XIV.156; Plato, *Hippias Minor* 363a4). Given that most people die, it is not surprising that the gates are called 'wide' (εὐρυπυλές: *Il.* XXIII.74): they must receive many people, just as Hades himself is called Polydektes or Polydegmon ('Receiver of Many': *Hymn. Hom. Cer.* 9, 17) and Polyxeinos ('Host to Many': Aeschylus, fr. 228 Radt; Callimachus, fr. 285 Pfeiffer). The image of gates is old, as an Indian funeral text mentions 'the fearful path (death as a journey!) to Yama's gates'; in Nordic mythology Hel's walls are extremely

[16] Lincoln 1979, reprinted in Lincoln 1991: 96–106; West 2007: 392 note 50 (full bibliography); for the Indian dogs, see also Oettinger 2018.

high and her gates strong (*Gylfaginning* 34), and Baltic mythology also knew of gates as entrances to the other world, but alternated gates with doors.[17] Latin mythology, on the other hand, basically only knows of doors and its occasional mention of gates is probably influenced by Greek literature (Horsfall on Verg. *Aen.* 6.106).

Vergil also uses the picture for his image of the underworld in the *Aeneid*: "facing him [Aeneas] there was a great gate, and columns of massive adamant, such that no human force, not even the gods of heaven have the strength to tear them down" (6.552–6.554, transl. Horsfall). It is somewhat puzzling that these gates are now located in Tartarus, the deepest part of the underworld, and are said to be made of adamant, the legendary, hardest metal of antiquity, which is rarely mentioned in early Greek literature (Hesiod, *Theog.* 161, *Op.* 147), but is not unusual in Latin poetry and early Christian writings.[18] We must probably think of a Hellenistic model, as the term is used by Theocritus (2.33–2.34: τὸν ἐν Ἄιδα κινήσαις ἀδάμαντα), the Sicilian poet who worked in Alexandria and who may well have derived it from a lost epic model. In any case, Homer in his *Iliad* also refers to the 'iron gates and bronze threshold' (VIII.15) of Tartarus, which lies far below Hades.

The gates lead to the 'House of Hades', clearly a formulaic expression that is mentioned several times. Although it appears in various forms in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, singular and plural,[19] it must be old, since it has Hittite, Indian and Irish parallels.[20] It is interesting to note that in our earliest Orphic Gold Leaf, that of Hipponion (*c.* 400 BCE), the underworld is also called the Ἀίδαο δόμους εὐήρεας (*Orphicorum Fragmenta* 474, ed. Bernabé = 1.2, ed. Graf/Johnston). There is some uncertainty about the translation of this expression, which Graf and Johnston render as 'the well-built house of Hades', Bernabé and Jiménez as 'the well-built abode of Hades', Edmonds as 'the well-built halls of Hades' and Riedweg as 'the palace of Hades'. However, the expression 'House of Hades' is clearly used here metaphorically for the underworld,

[17] West 2007: 389 (Yama); Mannhardt 1936: 59 (Baltic: nine gates), 62–63. For the complicated history of Mannhardt's book, see Perabo 2022: 440.

[18] Gates: Vergil, *Aeneid* 6.552; Propertius 4.11.3; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 4.453.

[19] Among others: *Il.* III.322, VII.131, XIV.457, *Od.* 9.524, 10.512, 11.150, 627, 23.252, 322 (δόμον Ἀΐδος); *Od.* 11.68 (δόμου ἐξ Ἀΐδαο); *Il.* XV.251 (δῶμ᾽ Ἀΐδαο); XXII.482, *Od.* 10.175, 491, 564, 14.208 (Ἀΐδαο δόμους); 22.52, 23.19, *Od.* 4.834, 15.350, 20.208, 24.204, 264 (Ἀΐδαο δόμοισιν); 23.74 (Ἄϊδος δῶ); Empedocles B 142.

[20] Lincoln 1982, reprinted in Lincoln 1991: 107–118; Janda 2000: 69–71; West 2007: 388; note also Vergil, *Aeneid* 6.269: *domos Ditis*, 534: *tristis sine sole domos*.

so that Edmonds's 'halls of Hades' may be the most appropriate. In any case, the adjective εὐήρεας, which in Homer is normally used for an oar, is clearly a later misreading of an original εὐρήσεις, as Richard Janko (2016: 110–111) has shown. It remains interesting that the Orphic poet of these lines used such a traditional expression, which was losing its popularity after the fifth century and tragedy – perhaps to add further solemnity to his instructions; or he may have taken it from one of the poems about Orpheus' *katabasis*, where it would have been quite appropriate, given that Orpheus actually visited Hades and Persephone.

We have finally arrived in the underworld, but it seems that the dead did not have to stay in some kind of prison. Different traditions have a much nicer idea about life after death. It was, I think, Paul Thieme (1905–2001) who was the first to collect material on the existence of a meadow in the afterlife (Thieme 1952: 47–50). Naturally, as an Indologist, he adduced passages from the *Rig Veda* and the *Avesta* that indicated the existence of a pasture for cattle in the other world. However, his starting point was two verses from the *Odyssey*, which mention a 'meadow of asphodel' (11.539, 573), although he should also have noticed 'the asphodel meadow, where the souls live, the shades of the dead' (24.13). Subsequently, Hittitologists have also found evidence of an underworld meadow and have noted that 'to go to the meadow' was a Hittite expression for 'dying'. West also mentions a connection between cows and the dead in a Latvian *daina*.[21]

Although the connection between the meadow and the underworld is clear, its role in Greek mythology and beliefs deserves more attention than Thieme and West have given it. To start with, what does this asphodel mean? Later authors, beginning with the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, interpret the asphodel meadow as a beautiful and fragrant meadow full of flowers and the asphodel as a nutritious and medicinal plant with healing properties. Both ancient and modern scholars have struggled with the appropriateness of the plant for a meadow, though, and the exact meaning of the expression still seems a problem.[22] However, there can be no doubt of the fact that a meadow was an important element of the underworld, which remained important

[21] Hittite: Puhvel 1981: 210–215 (with unpersuasive speculations on the meaning of Elysium) and 1987: 138–140; Henar Velasco López 2001; West 2007: 383; rather adventurous, Oreshko 2023.

[22] Verpoorten 1962: Biraud 1993; Amigues 2002; Reece 2007.

well until the end of the fifth century, with particular prominence in Eleusinian and Orphic Mysteries, and as such was also appropriated by Plato in his own images of the underworld.[23]

A *thrênos* by Pindar mentions 'the meadows with red roses' (fr. 129 Maehler) and the chorus in Aristophanes' *Frogs* sings of the 'rose-rich, flowery meadows' (448–449), but it is especially in typically Orphic literature that we find references to a meadow in the underworld.[24] Although most of the references are relatively late, going from Plutarch to Proclus, a fourth-century Gold Leaf from Thurii (*Orphicorum Fragmenta* 487, ed. Bernabé = 3, ed. Graf/Johnston) mentions the 'holy meadows and groves of Persephone' and a contemporary one from Thessalian Pherae exhorts the initiate: 'enter the holy meadow' (*Orphicorum Fragmenta* 493, ed. Bernabé = 27, ed. Graf/Johnston). Fritz Graf (1974: 79–94) has analysed in detail all the passages, except the last one, which was discovered after the publication of his book, and argues persuasively that these mentions of underworld meadows originally derive from Orphic literature and were taken over in simplified form from there into the Eleusinian Mysteries. Graf does not exclude the influence of Pythagorean traditions, but in the – admittedly small – corpus of Pythagorean passages about the afterlife meadows do not play any role at all.[25] As with the 'House of Hades', then, we can see that the Orphic poets preserved parts of the traditional Indo-European otherworld imagery in their specific poetry. Unfortunately, this poetry has been irretrievably lost, except for some fragments, and we can only guess the extent to which it also used the other motifs we have discussed.

In this respect, there is an interesting transformation to be noticed in the Orphic poets. There can be no doubt that the Greek underworld, as in other Indo-European traditions, was originally imagined as an area of obscurity and darkness.[26] In this context, it is appropriate to note a new interpretation of the obscure expression ἀάατον Στυγὸς ὕδωρ (*Il.* XIV.271), which the linguist Alexander Nikolaev (2015; see also Oettinger 2020) has explained as 'the sunless water of the Styx'. In other words, the sun does not shine in the underworld, as indeed

[23] Plato, *Gorgias* 523e6–524a7 and *Republic* 614e2; Falbo 2022b: 191–195.

[24] See also *Orphicorum Fragmenta* 340, ed. Bernabé (οἳ μέν κ'εὐαγέωσιν ὑπ' αὐγὰς ἠελίοιο, | αὖτις ἀποφθίμενοι μαλακώτερον οἶτον ἔχουσιν) *ἐν καλῷ λειμῶνι* βαθύρροον ἀμφ' Ἀχέροντα; Ps.Plato, *Axiochos* 371c; Lucian, *Verae historiae* 2.14.

[25] This is clear from Riedweg 2021.

[26] West 2007: 388; Norelius 2020; Falbo 2021.

is emphasised in several Greek passages (Aeschylus, *Septem* 856–860; Euripides, *Alcestis* 436–437) but which is also clear from the Greek and Indo-European expression 'to leave the light of the sun' for 'to die' (Nikolaev 2015: 219–220; Oettinger 2020: 164–166). However, this is not the case in the Orphic tradition. It is precisely here that in the underworld a presence of the sun is emphasised, as we can see in the Orphically coloured passages of Pindar (fr. 129 Maehler) and Aristophanes (*Frogs* 454–455).[27] Evidently, the Orphic poets not only adopted ancient motifs, but they were also able to turn them into their opposite.

5. Conclusion

The evidence discussed seems sufficient to confirm West's inclusion of ancient Greece within the Indo-European evidence. However, we cannot help noticing that he does not ask how we should imagine the chain of tradition and its possible transformations. When we look at our oldest evidence, for example, about the meadow, it is clear that the Indo-Iranian traditions imagined a beautiful meadow for their cows. But there is nothing of this visible in the Greek evidence. Admittedly, Hades receives the epithet 'famous for his colts', but there is no mention of meadows in this respect. Evidently, the link between meadow and cows in Greek epic poetry was dropped over time, but the existence of the meadow itself remained attractive enough for dry and hot Greece to survive this change. Subsequently, it was reinterpreted within the context of a pleasant hereafter in the Orphic tradition. The Orphic images, like the *Jenseitsvorstellungen* of Homer, were transmitted via poetry, be it epics or laments. So we have to imagine a continuous poetic tradition that adapted traditional Indo-European material to the changing ecological conditions in Greece, but it also seems to have transferred the hereafter to a world beneath the earth – perhaps under Mesopotamian influence, as already suggested. Unfortunately, the Mycenaean evidence has not given us any information about poets, so in the end we remain about this process in a darkness like that of the underworld![28]

[27] As noted by Graf 1974: 82–83, overlooked by Edmonds III 2021, whose discussion is, as often, too minimalist.

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6. The god of the night sky as a guide to the afterlife

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Abstract

In Greek myth, the constellation Orion is represented by (at least) three figures: the eponymous Boeotian hunter Orion, the Cretan king Minos and the god Dionysus bear names that were initially epithets of the celestial giant, the only semi-human figure in the firmament. Both similarities and individual characteristics of the three can be derived as Aitia from the constellation and its perceived relationship to its celestial neighbours. Dionysus, who "liberates" the deceased mystics in the Orphic tradition, and Minos, the judge of the dead, share a concern for the deceased that was probably also inherent in their common origin, the Orion of prehistoric Greek myth.

1. The birth and early trials of Dionysus

Beit She'an or Bisān, the ancient Scythopolis, lies about 37 kilometres from Nazareth.[1] Scythopolis was also called Nysa, like several places in the Greek world that recalled the mythical birthplace of Dionysus. This is where he was thus born: the son of the sky-god and an earthly woman who was taken up to heaven after her death. After his birth, little Dionysus was placed in a winnowing-fan (λίκνον). Soon after, a hostile king named Lycurgus sought his life (*Iliad* 6, 130–140) and Dionysus went abroad. The young god wandered through the country, gathered an ever-growing crowd of followers around him and turned

[1] I would like to thank Jenny Larsson very much for the kind invitation, Riccardo Ginevra for valuable comments in a review of two of my books, Till van Lil (Münster) for improving the English of my contribution and Jan Bremmer for valuable suggestions.

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water into wine. But people often did not recognise him in his divinity. Finally, we see him hanging on the wooden pillar.[2]

2. Dionysus beyond death: Orphic initiation and afterlife liberation

The deeds and sufferings of Dionysus are well known. We learn from the "Orphic" gold leaves of Pelinna that he also has a beneficial effect on the deceased initiates. The two gold leaves of Pelinna are among the many afterlife passports found in tombs that are associated with the name Orpheus and date from the 6th to the 1st century BC. In the identical beginning of both texts Dionysus appears under his epithet Bakchios:[3]

> νῦν ἔθανες καὶ νῦν ἐγένου, τρισόλβιε, ἄματι τῷδε.
> εἰπεῖν Φερσεφόνᾳ σ᾽ ὅτι Βάκχιος αὐτὸς ἔλυσε.
>
> You have just died and have just been born, thrice happy, on this day.
> Tell Persephone that Bacchus himself has liberated you.

Alberto Bernabé and Ana Isabel Jiménez San Cristóbal place their discussion of this text under the heading "The soul liberated by Dionysus" (2008: 66) and explain (72):

> Before the discovery of the tablets from Pelinna, it was believed […] that liberation on the part of Dionysus was obtained thanks to initiation into the mysteries during life, without the god intervening once the initiate had died. There was no evidence for Dionysus leading his initiates in the Beyond, as he had led them in this world. Despite his partially chthonic character, his function with regard to the μύσται καὶ βάκχοι concluded as soon as they were laid down in their tombs. That is, the initiate would already have done what was most difficult, and all that remained for him was the ultramundane passage, carrying his tablet like a reminder. Nevertheless, as result of the new discoveries, we can affirm […] that in the beliefs reflected by the Pelinna tablet, Dionysus fulfills a purificatory function in a personal and eschatological sense: he assists the initiate at the junction of the limit between life and death, between the human and the divine. Liberation after death is a consequence of initiation in the mysteries, carried out during life.

[2] For details and further parallels in the stories of Dionysus and Christ, cf. Janda 2010: 256–259.

[3] Cf. Bernabé/Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008: 257–258 (text), 62 (translation).

An extensive academic discussion deals with the specific world view and afterlife concepts of these Orphic gold leaves and their relationship to other Greek ideas about Hades and Elysion.[4] For myself, I would first like to address the question: where does Dionysus come from, this god so complex and also significant for the initiated?

3. Indo-European theonyms: a tradition of millennia

For the Indo-Europeanist, it is clear that the name of Dionysus has no equivalent in any other Indo-European language. We should not view this negatively and regret that we can only reconstruct four supernatural beings by name: the well-known Father Heaven (**Dii̯éu̯s ph₂tḗr*), his daughter, the Dawn (**H₂áu̯sōs*, **Diu̯ós dhugh₂tḗr*), 'the winescented' **Ghandhr̥u̯o-*, the ancestor of the Centaurs and Gandharves,[5] and finally also the goat god as ancestor of Pan and Pūṣan (**Páh₂usōn*, Gen. **Puh₂snés*), to whose common features Jil Schermutzki was recently able to add important new observations.[6] As Martin Nilsson (1967, 1: 336) pointed out long ago, the name of Father Heaven alone guarantees – "eine Tatsache von der allergrößten Wichtigkeit" – that we can basically count on a millennia-long continuity of the cult, and with Jan Bremmer (2002: 138) the question arises as to what seemed so important to prehistoric people that they worshipped these deities over such long periods of time.

4. The autonomization of cultic epithets: the case of Dionysus

For the Indo-Europeanist, this direct reconstruction of names is most important. But it is not the only method. Even in the colourful onomastic-etymological diversity of gods' names such as Ares and Mars, Demeter and Ceres, Hermes and Mercury, Aphrodite and Venus, a continuity is tangible, if we can track the rise of epithets to autonomy in several cases. *Uenus*, for example, was probably once an epithet of the Dawn,[7] as was the Celtic *Brigit*.[8] In the *festschrift* for the unforgotten Jens Elmegård Rasmussen, I tried to show that 'Heaven on high' (PIE **u̯érsmen-Diu̯ós*) gave rise not only to the Vedic expression *várṣman- divás*

[4] Cf. the literature given in Bernabé/Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008: 256–257.
[5] Cf. Janda 2022b.
[6] Cf. Schermutzki 2024; cf. also Janda (in print a).
[7] Cf. Dunkel 1988–1990: 10.
[8] Cf. Campanile 1996, slightly modified in Janda 2010: 245.

but also to Uranos (Οὐρανός < *u̯orsm̥no-).[9] Was Aphrodite 'who shines in the foam of the sea' directly an epithet of the Dawn or was there a goddess Kypris in between, who has nothing to do with Cyprus but is simply the personified 'Desire' (: Lat. *cupiō*), as Laura Massetti in a brilliant work (2016) and I[10] suggested independently of each other?

The name of Dionysus gives no information about this. In any case, it seems to contain νῦσα, which names his birthplace, a mountain (Νῦσα), but according to Pherecydes of Athens it was also once used in the sense of 'tree' (νύσας … ἐκάλουν τὰ δένδρα). I suspected that the concepts of mountain and tree, as incompatible as they may seem at first glance, might come together under the idea of the world axis, the great 'inclination', as we could understand νῦσα etymologically.[11] As far as the first element of the name is concerned, I continued a suggestion by Martin Peters.[12] Peters saw the most archaic – not the oldest – name form in (*)Διέν(ν)υσος (Thessaly, Amorgos) and connected the first element with the verb δίεμαι 'chase, set in motion'. In my opinion, the name originally meant 'who sets the world axis in motion'. The proposed combination of δίεμαι with a word meaning 'world axis' is supported by the fact that the word δίνη, which is etymologically related to it, denotes the cosmic vortex in the pre-Socratic philosophers.[13] Furthermore, we can again think of the pole on which Dionysus hangs on the so-called "Lenaean vases".[14] This may be so. But, in any case, there is no way to prove that Dionysus, or the older Dienysus, is an epithet of a god attested elsewhere.

It is perhaps quite interesting to learn that Friedrich Nietzsche in his book *The birth of tragedy out of the spirit of music* implicitly reckons with a rise of epithets to autonomy in the Dionysian sphere when he states:[15]

> It is an incontestable tradition that Greek tragedy in its oldest form had as its subject only the suffering of Dionysus and that for a long time later the individually present stage heroes were only Dionysus. But with the same certainty we can assert that right up to the time of Euripides Dionysus never

[9] Cf. Janda 2004 and 2010: 45–70.
[10] Lecture at the Masarykova Univerzita Brno on 19 April 2010, and Janda (in preparation a); for an etymological explanation of Ἀφροδίτη cf. Janda 2005: 349–360.
[11] Cf. Janda 2010: 16–23, 163–173.
[12] Cf. Peters 1989: 212–220, 255–267.
[13] Cf. Janda 2010: 37–41.
[14] Numerous illustrations in Frontisi-Ducroux 1991.
[15] 1872, transl. 2003: 10.

> ceased being the tragic hero, that all the famous figures of the Greek theatre, like Prometheus, Oedipus, and so on, are only masks of that primordial hero Dionysus.

There could be a grain of truth here. To cite just one example that has probably not yet been noticed: in the famous "Song of the women of Elis" Dionysus is summoned to appear 'with his bull's foot' – or 'ox foot' (τῷ βοέῳ ποδί).[16] As is well known, the tragic hero Οἰδί-πους also has a big, 'swollen foot'.[17]

5. Indra and Dionysus: the problem of structural and etymological parallels

Be that as it may, neither the direct reconstruction nor the assumption of the rise of a byname to autonomy will get us anywhere. Both approaches are dear to the Indo-Europeanist, for operating with the specificity of etymologies and phonetic laws excludes coincidence or borrowing. What remains is the comparison of similar traits – to be found everywhere in religious studies and which is in itself absolutely justified. No one should doubt today that the Indo-Europeans believed in Divine Twins, the ancestors of the Dioscuri and Aśvin, of Hengist and Horsa, Romulus and Remus and many others – although we cannot reconstruct a name or a designation.[18] In the myth, these pairs of twins are associated with women in whom the Dawn seems to appear: directly in the Vedic Uṣas and, indirectly, again via an epithet, in Helena.[19]

In the context of the divine Dawn, we meet another structural parallel of the greatest importance:[20] Eos and Orion are lovers until Artemis shoots the Boeotian hunter (Odyssey 5, 118–124). In India, Eos' sister Uṣas is pursued by Prajāpati until all are transferred to the sky, Prajāpati as Orion and Uṣas as Alpha Tauri, which is Aldebaran. Aldebaran sounds esoteric but we suddenly understand why Eos and Orion in particular are lovers: They are immediately adjacent in the sky. The Dawn dwells on this star at night, apparently because of its

[16] Cf. *PMG* 871. Text and translation: Schlesier 2002: 161–162.

[17] Cf. Janda 2010: 337–340; 2022a: 68. For an interpretation of the Oedipus myth as a whole, cf. Janda (in preparation b and c).

[18] Cf. e.g. West 2007: 186–191; O'Brien, *EIEC*: 161–165; Ward 1968.

[19] For Uṣas and the Aśvin cf. Oberlies 2012: 51, 128; for Ἑλένη, older Laconian Fελένᾱ cf. Jamison 2001: 313–314.

[20] Cf. Janda 2016: 101–127.

reddish colour. So the Indo-Europeans reckoned that the Dawn and Orion were lovers.

But back to Dionysus and the search for recurring motifs! Dionysus shares several important, highly specific linguistic parallels with the Vedic god Indra.[21] Both are addressed by the singer's 'desire' (κῶμος: *kā́ma-*, PIE **kóh₂mo-*). Both have many 'faces' or 'masks' (πρόσωπον: *-pratīka-*, PIE **pre/otih₃kʷo-*) and have to do with the 'flowering of wine' (Ἀνθεσ-τήρια: *ándhas-*, PIE **h₂ándhos-*). Both are leaders of a Wild Hunt (Βρόμιος: *grā́ma-*, PIE **gʷrómo-*). Indra is 'strong', denoted by *túmra-*, the preform of which (**tumlo-*)[22] is the derivational basis for the name of Dionysus' mother, Semele (Σεμέλη < **tu̯emelā*). For the moment, one can only state these parallels, not explain them. Dionysus is not a dragon slayer like Indra. Or can Tarhunt, the Luwian weather god of the vineyard, help us? He is, on the one hand, a dragon slayer and refers in his name precisely to this and to Indra's great deed (**terh₂-* 'to overcome'), and he is, on the other hand, depicted with grapes, as Tarhunt 'of the vineyard'.[23] The question has to remain open for the time being.

6. The origin of Dionysus

For the explanation of Dionysus' origin, I will start from a tradition that may seem insignificant at first glance. A famous choral song in Sophocles' *Antigone* calls Dionysus the "chorus leader of the stars":[24]

> ἰὼ πῦρ πνεόντων
> χοράγ᾽ ἄστρων, νυχίων
> φθεγμάτων ἐπίσκοπε,
> Ζηνὸς γένεθλον, προφάνηθ᾽,
> ὦναξ, σαῖς ἅμα περιπόλοις
> Θυίασιν, αἵ σε μαινόμεναι πάννυχοι
> χορεύουσι τὸν ταμίαν ῎Ιακχον.
>
> Hail, leader of the dance of the stars breathing fire, master of the voices heard by night, son of Zeus, appear, king, with your attendant Thyiads, who in their frenzy dance all night in honour of their lord Iacchus!

[21] For details and further parallels cf. Janda 2000: 260–292.

[22] With analogical syllabification instead of **tu̯mlo-*.

[23] For Tarhunt's name cf. Watkins 1995: 343–356; Janda 2010: 112–114; for the İvriz relief cf. Haas 1994: 328 and fig. 55; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tarḫunz (11 February 2024).

[24] vv. 1146–1150, text and translation: Lloyd-Jones 1998: 108–109.

Figure 1. From left to right: Orion (with belt and right foot Rigel), Alpha Tauri/Aldebaran (in the head of the "bull" Taurus) and the cluster of the Pleiades. Photo: Panda~thwiki, Wikimedia Commons © License: CC BY 4.0.

In my opinion, there is only one figure that can be called the choir leader of the stars. This is Orion, who bears the greatest resemblance to a human being among all the constellations. Under this name Orion, the Greeks saw a mighty hunter from Boeotia who had been transferred to the sky.[25] Researchers disagree about what belongs to the constellation and what to the earthly hunter. But, as far as we can trace the biographical traits, they are all derived from the firmament as *aitia* of celestial phenomena. Worldwide, the movement of the stars is metaphorically seen as a chasing, hunting and fleeing.[26] The birth of the Boeotian Orion from a cow's hide is explained by the fact that the constellation is preceded by the bull Taurus, which is simply translated into a mythical genealogy.

From Hesiod (erg. 617–622) we learn that Orion chases the Pleiades, a myth that precisely describes the relative positions and movement of the two constellations. But the Pleiades were also called βότρυς 'bunch of grapes' by the Greeks, owing to their shape. Leading archaeoastronomers

[25] For the Boeotian hunter Orion cf. Renaud 2004; Fontenrose 1981.
[26] Cf. Berezkin 2005; Hübner 1998: 144.

such as Walter Boll,[27] Hans-Georg Gundel (1952: 2490), Anton Scherer (1953: 144–145) and Wolfgang Hübner (2002: 1127) regard this name as popular and thus a serious tradition. Under the name or former epithet Ὠρίων, the constellation pursues the Pleiades, under the former epithet (*)Διέν(ν)υσος/Διόνυσος the 'grape' – forever.

Dionysus has an ox foot, as we have seen, Oedipus a 'swollen foot', the constellation Orion the radiant *Rigel*, an Arabic name that simply means 'foot'. Stefan Schaffner (2021) has just confirmed the assumption made earlier that the Old Icelandic *Aurvandilstá* 'Aurvandil's toe' designates this star Rigel, which of course also means that *Aurvandil/Orendel* is a Germanic name for Orion.

As a result of the metaphor of the heavenly hunt just mentioned and because of its roughly anthropomorphic shape, Orion is a mighty hunter followed by his hunting dog. Sirius, the brightest fixed star and lord of the dog days, bears no resemblance to a dog. It is only thought of in this way because it follows a hunter. Once the idea of the dog had solidified in centuries of storytelling, it could also become an evil pursuer, a wild wolfhound. Thus Homer, our oldest witness, reports that a king named Λυκοῦργος, 'who has the works of a wolf',[28] pursues Dionysus and forces him to dive into the sea (Iliad 6, 130–140). On the other hand, well-meaning 'dogs' also follow Dionysus, namely the Bacchae and Maenads, whom Euripides calls 'dogs' in his tragedy *The Bacchae*.[29]

We only find starting points for an explanation, but no definitive interpretation, in the *phallophoria*, the 'bearing of the phallus' in the cult of Dionysus.[30] On the one hand, our constellation has something that could be interpreted anatomically as a phallus, the stars M42, θ and ι Orionis. On the other hand, the blind Orion in the myth carries a boy named Κηδαλίων on his shoulders. Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff compared this name with κήδαλον· αἰδοῖον 'genitals, phallus' (Hesych).[31] Is this idea connected to the club that Orion carries over his shoulder according to Hellenistic astronomers? For the time being, we can only note that Orion and Dionysus share the motif of the phallus.

[27] 1903: 42, 122 fn. 2.
[28] For an explanation of the name cf. Janda 2022a: 34–42.
[29] Eur. Bakch. 731; for Dionysus as "hunter" cf. Janda 2022a: 49–52.
[30] For the Dionysian phallophoria cf. Csapo 2013.
[31] 1971: 33 fn. 4.

As the only human figure in the nocturnal firmament, Dionysus is thus worthily named as one "who sets the world axis in motion".

In my view, it is therefore a good idea to regard the name Διόνυσος/(*)Διέν(ν)υσος as a former epithet of the constellation and figure of myth Orion. This is certainly simplified. There may have been several or even many figures between the Indo-European and the two Greek names. Indeed, it would of course be quite possible that the Indo-Europeans already used more than one name when they spoke of the constellation. Central to the wine god is, in my opinion, that his heavenly, nocturnal archetype eternally follows the 'grape' (βότρυς).

7. Tales from the stars: soul guide and judge of the dead

We would like to have cumulative evidence that myths originate from the night sky. I will limit myself here to two stories.[32] The myth of the Athenian vintner Ikaros or Ikarios comes, in Walter Burkert's words (1983: 223),

> from Ikaria, the modern Dionyso, an Attic village famous for its vineyards and the customs of its vine-growers. Dionysus himself came to the house of Ikarios, bringing him the vine and instructing him in cultivation, harvesting, and pressing of the wine. Ikarios happily loaded the casks full of the god's new gift onto his cart and brought it to his fellow villagers. But the 'opening of the casks' turned into a disaster: when the revellers, unfamiliar with wine, grew drunk and sank to the ground, Ikarios was suspected of having poisoned them. The angry crowd thereupon killed their benefactor with clubs, and his blood mixed with the wine. His daughter, Erigone, led by her dog Maira, searched desperately for her lost father till she found his body in a well; she subsequently hanged herself. Thus, in the land of wine, in Attica, the myth of the wine overflows with gruesome details: this wine is a very special juice and anything but harmless.

Burkert implicitly brings the slain wine-bringer Ikarios together with the wine-bringer Dionysus, who is also slain in other, more secret myths, when he writes (1985: 164): "Perhaps in secret the death of the god himself was spoken of much more directly; the association of wine and blood, with wine being described as the blood of the vine, is ancient and widespread." I have tried to back this up linguistically

[32] For more cf. Janda 2024a–b (and in print a–d, in preparation b–d).

by interpreting the name Ἰκάριος as 'Avatar', namely of Dionysus (cf. ἔοικα 'to be like').[33]

In this myth, we have the figures of Ikarios, his daughter Ἠρι-γόνη, the 'early-born', and the dog Μαῖρα. We can plot the three in a continuous sequence on a celestial map: Maira is the name of the dog, and also of Sirius on the island of Keos.[34] Erigone, the 'early-born', is apparently another name of Eos, who loves Orion, just like her Vedic sister Uṣas, who resides on Alpha Tauri/Aldebaran at night. What remains is, between both of them in the middle, Ikarios, the avatar of the wine-giving Dionysus. We can even discover above Ikarios' head the club with which he is killed.

But let us return to Dionysus, who according to the Orphic gold leaves of Pelinna 'releases' or 'liberates' (ἔλυσε) the soul of the initiated. The fact that the constellation Orion played a role for the deceased in early Greek and Indo-European eschatology can probably also be seen in the fact that Minos, the judge of the underworld in Homer (Odyssey 11, 568–571), has several of Orion's mythical features.[35] Minos is linked to a bull in three ways: a bull brings his mother Europa to Crete. Another bull emerges from the sea and testifies to Minos' right to kingship. And, finally, his wife becomes involved with this bull and gives birth to the bull-man Minotauros. Minos has no club – like Orion, Tarhunt, Heracles and Indra – but a golden sceptre with which he judges the dead according to the Odyssey. Michael Witzel (1984) has described in detail how, for Vedic India, the night sky and the afterlife are identical. So I think that the Indo-European constellation Orion was considered as a guide to the afterlife – besides also, for example, as a dragon slayer. When two of Orion's Greek epithets became independent in prehistoric times, Μίνως and Διόνυσος, in a way that of course still needs to be investigated in more detail, the aspects of a psychopomp remained partly intact for the two. The dog that followed this god of the night sky is in another tradition called Kerberos[36] – and he guards nothing other than the underworld. We now also understand why a mace-bearer, Heracles, pulls him away from there.

[33] Janda 2010: 200–202.
[34] Janda 2022a: 133, 149.
[35] Cf. Janda (in print d).
[36] Cf. Janda 2022a: 8–11.

8. From the description of the sky to myth

How did all these stories come about? I think the answer is surprisingly simple. When we look up at the clear sky at night, far from the lights of civilisation, in Namibia or on the south coast of Crete, we realise the difficulty of communicating our observations of the stars in their abundance and intangible patterns. But this communication was imperative for farmers, herders, sailors and other travellers. This communication had to make use of metaphors: hunting and pursuit; an arrow stuck in Orion, or his girdle; Orion's swollen foot; a tripod around the celestial pole (Janda 2005: 299–312). And also to verbalise perceived relations: Tištriia, the Iranian Sirius, "belongs to the triumvirate", the three famous stars of Orion's belt.[37] The dog follows the hunter, it is located on the extension of the line formed by the three belt stars. It could not fail that conceptions overlapped: one grandmother told the Indo-European child that Sirius is a wolfish dog following the great hunter; the other grandmother told him that Sirius is an archer who shot an arrow at Orion. The superimposition of these two motifs leads us to Apollo, the wolfish archer with the silver bow.[38] Irrespective of the relationships described so far, research has always compared Apollo to the Vedic god Rudra,[39] whom the texts actually identify with Sirius. A similar superimposition is also encountered in historic times when classical poets of Greece and Rome, according to Boll and Wilhelm Gundel, combine the star conceptions Bear and Wain.[40]

I am convinced that the uncovering of the histories of religions of Indo-European peoples and others and their myths is only just beginning and will make significant progress if we take note of the immediate textual sources – the linguistic reconstruction of names, bynames, characteristic properties and attributes in the cross-cultural and cross-linguistic perspective specific to Indo-European studies, namely the operation with sound laws that exclude coincidental parallels or borrowings – the rise of epithets to autonomy – and finally and brand new: the superimposition of ideas, starting from the observation and description of the night sky.

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[37] Cf. Forssman 1968: 59–60.

[38] Cf. Janda 2022a: 87–145.

[39] Cf. e.g. West 2007: 148; Oberlies 1998: 214.

[40] 1937: 879 (unfortunately, no source is given for the "wheels of the bear" in classical literature mentioned here); for the dog-headed archer see also Gundel 1925: 322.

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7. The love life of the dead
Norse Valkyries from an Indo-European perspective

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Abstract

Old Norse *Val-kyrja* is a reflex of Proto-Germanic **wala-kuzjōn-*, which is easily interpreted as 'slain-chooser, she who chooses the slain'. In view of the likely origin of Valkyries as female death-demons and in view of the compound's great antiquity, however, it is also possible that **wala-kuzjōn-* originally meant 'slain-taster', displaying the older semantics (still attested in Gothic and Old English) of the Proto-Indo-European root **ǵeu̯s-* 'taste' that underlies Proto-Germanic **keus-*. The development from corpse-tasting she-demons to splendid warrior-women who love mortal heroes may be linked to the technical formula of "own-choice" marriages in Germanic ('to choose a man as husband', as attested in Old Norse and Old English). The Valkyries and their "chosen" Einherjar may thus be Norse counterparts to several Indo-European "Heavenly Maidens" who are said to "choose as husbands for themselves" characters who were originally not gods and were only accepted among them later (e.g. Sūryā in the Indic tradition and Helen in the Greek one).

1. Introduction: afterlives of the "Hel type" vs. afterlives of the "Valhǫll type" in Indo-European traditions[1]

Mythological texts composed in ancient Indo-European (IE) languages mention two main destinies that await human beings after death, both

[1] This study is part of the project "SunSHINE – The Sun-Chariot's Journey towards the Nordic Sky: On the (Pre-)History of Ideas on Sky, Sun, and Sunlight in Northern Europe", which has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement no. 890522. It is my great pleasure to thank the members of the Roots

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being well attested in Norse mythology: we may correspondingly refer to these two afterlife models as the "Hel type" and the "Valhǫll type".

On the one hand, together with other undesirable states such as ILLNESS and DANGER,[2] DEATH could be thought of as the opposite of FUNCTIONAL (HEALTHY AND SAFE) LIFE.[3] Since LIFE was conceptualized as involving several activities that are habitually more or less co-present in the life of a human being (at least within an idealized conceptualization), the DEAD (and characters who were in other NON-FUNCTIONING STATES) were imagined as unable to do such things (Ginevra 2020a: 117–122 and passim), for example being unable to properly STAND (as in (1) in Vedic Sanskrit and (2) in Homeric Greek), to SEE (as in (1)–(3), the latter in Homeric Greek as well), to SPEAK (as in (2) in Greek and (4) in Middle Welsh), and/or to EAT properly (as in (5) in Hittite and (6) in Old Norse). This negative afterlife model is the one evoked by Old Norse (ON) *Hel* (6), the name of an undesirable underworld and of its ruling goddess in Norse mythology.[4] Within this model, the DEAD were also generally imagined to be unable to HAVE SOCIAL RELATIONS

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The translations are adapted from van Buitenen 1975 (*Mahābhārata*), Davies 2007 (*Branwen ferch Llŷr*), Eggeling 1885 (*Śatapathabrāhmaṇa*), Faulkes 1987 (*Prose Edda*), Fulk 2010 (*Marvels of the East*), Jones & Ormerod 1926 (Pausanias), Hoffner 1998 (Hittite myths), Jamison & Brereton 2014 (*Rigveda*), Larrington 2014 (*Poetic Edda*), Most 2018 (Hesiod), Murray & Dimock 1919 (*Odyssey*), Murray & Wyatt 1924 (*Iliad*), Race 2009 (Apollonius Rhodius), Thorpe 1834 (*Apollonius of Tyre*) and Whitelock 1979 (*Laws of Cnut 1020*). Unless otherwise noted, original texts are quoted from the editions used in the corresponding translations, e.g. passages from Snorri's *Edda* are quoted on the basis of Faulkes's (2005, 2007a, 2007b) normalized editions. *Branwen ferch Llŷr* is quoted according to Thomson 1961; Hittite texts are quoted on the basis of Fuscagni 2012 (KBo 22.178 + KUB 48.109); Old English texts are quoted according to the University of Toronto's *Dictionary of Old English* (whose abbreviations are used throughout the chapter); the Latin *Historia Apollonii regis Tyri* is quoted from Waiblinger 1994.

[2] In accordance with widespread conventions, in the next sections lexical and onomastic items are printed in italics (e.g., Old Norse *valkyrja*) and conceptual items in small caps (e.g., DEATH).

[3] On the prototypical and idealized conceptualization of LIFE (its "Idealized Cognitive Model", as per Lakoff's [1987: 68–76] terminology) as FUNCTIONAL (HEALTHY AND SAFE) LIFE in Indo-European, see also Ginevra 2021a: 191 and *passim*; 2021b: 174 and *passim*; 2024: 133 and *passim*.

[4] Reflex of a Proto-Germanic term **haljō*-, cf. Gothic *halja*, Old English *hell*, Old Saxon *hellia*, Old High German *hella* (Casaretto 2004: 151; *EWA*, s.v. *hella*).

(as a further essential aspect of LIFE); for example, mothers would not recognize their children (as in (2) in Greek and (7) in Hittite).

1. "He whose rival was Indra **lay there in the** long **darkness [of death]**" (*Rigveda* 1.32.10d).[5]
2. "I see here the ghost of **my dead mother**; she **sits in silence** near the blood **and cannot bring herself to look upon the face of her own son or to speak to him**. Tell me, my lord, **how may she recognize that I am he**?" (*Odyssey* 11.141–11.144).[6]
3. "and declares that **not for long shall I look on the bright light of the sun** [i.e. that **I will die soon**]" (*Iliad* 5.119–5.120).[7]
4. "Then they threw **the corpses** into the cauldron […] and they [i.e. **the corpses**] would get up the next morning fighting as well as before except that **they could not talk**" (*Branwen ferch Llŷr* 376–378).[8]
5. "**They** [i.e. **the dead**] **do not eat** [goo]d **food; they do [no]t drink** my good **drink**" (KBo 22.178 + KUB 48.109 iii 4–5).[9]
6. "Her [i.e. the death goddess Hel's] **dish** [is called] **Hunger**, her **knife** [is called] **Famine**" (*Gylfaginning* 34).[10]
7. "Sisters having the same mother do [not] recognize each other. **Brothers having the same father** do [**not**] **recognize** each other. **A mother** does [**not**] **recognize** [her] own **child**. [A **child**] does [**not**] **recognize** [its own] **mother**" (KBo 22.178 ii 3–7 + KUB 48.109 ii 4–8).[11]

On the other hand, DEATH could also be conceived as a journey towards a most desirable afterlife, in which several aspects of FUNCTIONAL (HEALTHY AND SAFE) LIFE – such as EATING and DRINKING – were recreated, or even improved upon. As is well known, this positive afterlife model is the one evoked by ON *Val-hǫll* 'Hall of the Slain', name of a

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[5] Original text: *dīrghám* ***táma áśayad*** *índraśatruḥ*.

[6] Original text: **μητρὸς** τήνδ᾽ ὁρόω ψυχὴν **κατατεθνηυίης**· / ἡ δ᾽ **ἀκέουσ᾽ ἧσται** σχεδὸν αἵματος, **οὐδ᾽ ἐὸν υἱὸν / ἔτλη ἐσάντα ἰδεῖν οὐδὲ προτιμυθήσασθαι**. / εἰπέ, ἄναξ, **πῶς κέν με ἀναγνοίη τὸν ἐόντα**.

[7] Original text: **οὐδέ μέ φησι / δηρὸν ἔτ᾽ ὄψεσθαι λαμπρὸν φάος ἠελίοιο**.

[8] Original text: *Ac yna y byrywyt* ***y kalaned*** *yn y peir […], ac y kyuodyn tranoeth y bore yn wyr ymlad kystal a chynt*, *eithyr* ***na ellynt dywedut***.

[9] Original text: [*āšš*]***u adatar UL adanz***[***i***] *āššu* ***akuwatar***=*mi*[*t U*]***L akuwanzi***.

[10] Original text: ***Hungr diskr*** *hennar,* ***Sultr knífr*** *hennar*.

[11] Original text: *annanekē*[*š UL kan*]*ēššanzi* ***pappa***-**ŠE**[**Š**^{MEŠ} ***UL kan***]***ēššanzi*** ***annaš***=*za* **DUMU**-***a***[***n UL k***]***anēšzi*** [**DUMU**-***aš***=*za*] **AMA**-***a***[***n UL k***]***anēšzi***.

heavenly mansion (as in (8) and (9)) where those who die as warriors in battle go to become so-called *Einherjar*, Odin's soldiers. The same conception underlies not only the famous ancient Greek "paradises" called *Ēlúsion* 'Elysium' (as in (10)) or *Makárōn Nêsoi* 'Isles of the Blessed' (as in (11)) or *Leukḗ* 'White (Island)' (as in (12)), mythical places mentioned in the sources as the locations where ancient heroes such as Menelaus and Achilles (and a few others)[12] went after death, but also the Old Indic *Indra-loka-* 'World of Indra', where the souls of righteous kings who die in battle go according to Sanskrit epic mythology (13). Within this "LIFE-like" model of the afterlife, the dead were apparently assumed to HAVE SOCIAL RELATIONS, both with each other (the Einherjar enjoy each other's company in (9), either Menelaus or Achilles shall be husbands of Helen in (10) and (12)), and with the gods (the Einherjar are adoptive sons of Odin in (8), Menelaus shall keep being treated as Zeus' son-in-law in (10)).

8. "[Odin] is also called *Val*-father [i.e. father of the slain], since **all those who fall in battle** are his **adopted sons. He assigns them places in Valhall and Vingolf,** and they are then known as **Einheriar**" (*Gylfaginning* 20).[13]
9. "**All the Einheriar** fight in Odin's courts every day; they choose the slain and ride from the battle; **then they sit the more at peace together**" (*Vafþrúðnismál* 41).[14]
10. "But for yourself, **Menelaus**, fostered by Zeus, it is not ordained that you should die and meet your fate in horse-pasturing Argos, but **to the Elysian plain and the ends of the earth will the immortals convey you**, where dwells fair-haired Rhadamanthus, and **where life is easiest for men**. No snow is

[12] Cf. Pindar's *Olympian* 2.68–2.80: "But those with the courage to have lived three times in either realm, while keeping their souls free from all unjust deeds, travel the road of Zeus to the tower of Cronus, where ocean breezes blow round the Isle of the Blessed, and flowers of gold are ablaze, some from radiant trees on land, while the water nurtures others; with these they weave garlands for their hands and crowns for their heads, in obedience to the just counsels of Rhadamanthys, whom the great father keeps ever seated at his side, the husband of Rhea, she who has the highest throne of all. Peleus and Cadmus are numbered among them, and Achilles too, whom his mother brought, after she persuaded the heart of Zeus with her entreaties".

[13] Original text: [*Óðinn*] *heitir ok Valfǫðr, þvíat hans óskasynir eru allir þeir er í val falla.* ***Þeim skipar hann Valhǫll ok Vingólf****, ok heita þeir þá* ***einherjar****.*

[14] Original text: ***Allir einheriar*** */ Óðins túnom í / hǫggvaz hverian dag; / val þeir kiósa / oc ríða vígi frá, /* ***sitia meirr um sáttir saman****.*

there, nor heavy storm, nor ever rain, but always Ocean sends up blasts of the shrill-blowing West Wind that they may give cooling to men; **for you have Helen to wife, and are in their eyes the son-in-law of Zeus**" (*Odyssey* 4.561–4.569).[15]

11. "But upon others Zeus the father, Cronus' son, bestowed life and habitations far from human beings and settled them at the limits of the earth; and **these dwell with a spirit free of care on the Islands of the Blessed** beside deep-eddying Ocean – **happy heroes, for whom the grain-giving field bears honey-sweet fruit flourishing three times a year**" (Hesiod *Works and Days* 167–173).[16]
12. "In time he was healed and returned **from White Island, where, he used to declare, he saw Achilles**, as well as Ajax the son of Oileus and Ajax the son of Telamon. With them, he said, were Patroclus and Antilochus; **Helen was wedded to Achilles**" (Pausanias *Description of Greece* 3.19.13).[17]
13. "When he heard Narada's words, the Slayer of Vr̥tra and Vala [i.e. Indra] asked, '**Those law-wise kings of the earth who fight risking their lives and at the appointed time go unflinchingly to their death by the sword, theirs is this world forever**, their cow of plenty, as it is mine! But where are the heroic barons now?'" (*Mahābhārata* 3.51.15–3.51.17).[18]

The aim of this contribution is to argue that the latter "Valhǫll model" for the afterlife, according to which the dead could be provided with a

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[15] Original text: σοὶ δ᾽ οὐ θέσφατόν ἐστι, διοτρεφὲς ὦ **Μενέλαε**, / Ἄργει ἐν ἱπποβότῳ θανέειν καὶ πότμον ἐπισπεῖν, / ἀλλά **σ᾽ ἐς Ἠλύσιον πεδίον καὶ πείρατα γαίης / ἀθάνατοι πέμψουσιν**, ὅθι ξανθὸς Ῥαδάμανθυς, / **τῇ περ ῥηίστη βιοτὴ πέλει ἀνθρώποισιν**· / οὐ νιφετός, οὔτ᾽ ἂρ χειμὼν πολὺς οὔτε ποτ᾽ ὄμβρος, / ἀλλ᾽ αἰεὶ Ζεφύροιο λιγὺ πνείοντος ἀήτας / Ὠκεανὸς ἀνίησιν ἀναψύχειν ἀνθρώπους· / **οὕνεκ᾽ ἔχεις Ἑλένην καί σφιν γαμβρὸς Διός ἐσσι**.

[16] Original text: τοῖς δὲ δίχ᾽ ἀνθρώπων βίοτον καὶ ἤθε᾽ ὀπάσσας / Ζεὺς Κρονίδης κατένασσε πατὴρ ἐς πείρατα γαίης, / **καὶ τοὶ μὲν ναίουσιν ἀκηδέα θυμὸν ἔχοντες / ἐν μακάρων νήσοισι** παρ᾽ Ὠκεανὸν βαθυδίνην· / **ὄλβιοι ἥρωες, τοῖσιν μελιηδέα καρπὸν / τρὶς ἔτεος θάλλοντα φέρει ζείδωρος ἄρουρα**.

[17] Original text: χρόνῳ δὲ ὡς ὑγιάνας ἐπανῆλθεν **ἐκ τῆς Λευκῆς, ἰδεῖν μὲν ἔφασκεν Ἀχιλλέα,** ἰδεῖν δὲ τὸν Ὀιλέως καὶ τὸν Τελαμῶνος Αἴαντα, συνεῖναι δὲ καὶ Πάτροκλόν σφισι καὶ Ἀντίλοχον· **Ἑλένην δὲ Ἀχιλλεῖ μὲν συνοικεῖν**.

[18] Original text: *nāradasya vacaḥ śrutvā papraccha balavr̥trahā / **dharmajñāḥ pr̥thivīpālās tyaktajīvitayodhinaḥ / śastreṇa nidhanaṃ kāle ye gacchantyaparāṅmukhāḥ / ayaṃ loko 'kṣayas teṣāṃ** yathaiva mama kāmadhuk / kva nu te kṣatriyāḥ*.

social life and even with a lover, may be combined with lexical, phraseological and mythological data from several IE traditions, in order to provide us with new insight on the origin of the Norse Valkyries as "Heavenly Maidens" who get to choose mortal heroes to live in heaven with them.

2. Norse Valkyries and their possible Mediterranean background

The Norse "desirable afterlife" Valhǫll is inextricably linked to a well-known group of figures in Scandinavian mythology: the Valkyries, warrior-women who have inspired a number of renowned artworks (e.g. Richard Wagner's *Die Walküre*) and academic studies in modern times. These divine warrior-women and psychopomps were not only thought to choose which fallen warriors were to spend the afterlife with Odin until the End of Time (the so-called *Ragnarǫk*) but also imagined as entertainers and waitresses for the dead Einherjar (as in (14)).

14. "There are still others, whose function it is to wait in Val-hall, **serve drink and look after the tableware and drinking vessels**. […] **These are called valkyries**. Odin sends them to every battle. **They allot death to men** and govern victory. Gunn and Rota and the youngest norn,[19] called Skuld, always ride to **choose who shall be slain** and to govern the killings" (*Gylfaginning* 36).[20]

The Norse being called *val-kyrja* and her counterpart within Anglo-Saxon culture, called *wæl-cyrġe* (also *wæl-cyriġe, wæl-cyrie*), however, apparently had a darker side as well: in some sources they are clearly conceived as demonic beings with a connection to harm and death, being associated with witches in both Old Norse (*scass* in (15)) and Old English (OE) sources (*wiccean* in (16), *tessa* in (17)) and identified with terrible deities of classical myth (the Erinyes or Furies Tisiphon and Allecto; the war-goddess Bellona) in OE glosses (17); the OE term

[19] On the relations between Valkyries and Norns, see the overview in Egeler 2011: 32 fn. 52.

[20] Original text: *Enn eru þær aðrar er þjóna skulu í Valhǫll,* ***bera drykkju ok gæta borðbúnaðar ok ǫlgagna****.* […] ***Þessar heita valkyrjur****. Þær sendir Óðinn til hverrar orrostu.* ***Þær kjósa feigð á menn*** *ok ráða sigri. Guðr ok Rota ok norn in yngsta er Skuld heitir ríða jafnan at* ***kjósa val*** *ok ráða vígum.*

or, more precisely, its derivatives are used to refer to Gorgons in (18) and (19).

15. "**You were a harmful creature, a witch** [*scass*]**, a valkyrie, horrible, unnatural**, with All-Father; all the Einheriar had to fight, headstrong woman, on your account" (*Helgakviða Hundingsbana I* 38).[21]
16. "[we must with all our strength and all our might] shun all evil-doing, namely [the deeds of] slayers of their kin and murderers, and perjurers and **witches and sorceresses** [***wiccean & wælcyrian***], and adulterers, and incestuous deeds" (*LawCn 1020* 16 (15))[22]
17. **OE Glosses:** Tisiphona ***wælcyrie*** (*AntGl 6* 741); Allecto ***wælcyriġe*** (*ClGl 1* 280 (299)); Bellona ***wælcyrġe*** (ibid. 731 (754) = *ClGl 3* 1847); Herinis ***wælcyrġe*** (ibid. 2960 (2983)); Allecto ***wælcyrġe, tessa* 'witch'** (*ClGl 3* 2080).
18. *þe is haten Gorgoneus, þæt is* ***Wælkyrging*** "that is called Gorgoneus, that is, '**Valkyriean**'" (*Marv* 42 (9.1)).
19. *þa deor habbad eahta fet ond* ***welcyrian*** *eagan* "The animals have eight feet and **Valkyries'** eyes" (*Marv* 34, 6; OE translation of a Latin original *hae bestie oculos habent Gorgoneos*).

As argued by Matthias Egeler (2011), these demonic features of the Valkyries find close parallels in various further European traditions, which attest FEMALE characters, often appearing as a GROUP, who share close associations with DEATH, WAR, BIRDS (of carrion), and who display both EROTIC and LETHAL influences on men: the Old Irish Bodbs and Morrígains; the Greek Sirens, Harpies, Erinyes and Keres; the Roman Furies; and the Etruscan Vanth. On the basis of these striking correspondences, Egeler proposes that both the Norse Valkyries and the Irish Bodbs and Morrígains may reflect the diffusion into the early Germanic and Celtic cultural environments of the same (EROTICALLY CHARACTERIZED, LETHAL, BIRD-LIKE) FEMALE DEATH-DEMON(S) motif attested in the Mediterranean area, a diffusion that may have taken place within the context of the historically well-attested contacts

[21] Original text: ***Þú vart in scoða, scass, valkyria, / ǫtul, ámátlig,*** *at Alfǫður; / mundo einheriar allir beriaz/ svévís kona, um sacar þínar.*

[22] Original text: *ælc unriht ascunian, ðæt synd mægslagan & morðslagan & mansworan &* ***wiccean & wælcyrian*** *& æwbrecan & syblegeru.*

in antiquity between Graeco-Roman Southern Europe and Celto-Germanic Continental and Northern Europe. As explained in the next section, Egeler's reconstruction may find some support in one of two possible etymologies of the ON term *valkyrja*.

3. Old Norse *val-kyrja* 'slain-chooser' or 'slain-taster'?

ON *val-kyrja* and OE *wæl-cyrġe* are currently analyzed as reflexes of a Proto-Germanic (PGmc) verbal governing compound **wala-kuzjōn-* (de Vries 1962: 641; Kroonen 2013: 569), with:

- a first element ON *val°* and OE *wæl°* reflecting the PGmc noun **wala-* 'the slain on the battlefield, battlefield' attested by ON m. *val-r* 'id.', OE n. *wæl* 'id.', OHG n. *wal* 'battlefield';
- a second element ON *°kyr-ja* and OE *°cyr-ġe* reflecting a PGmc agentive feminine noun **°kuz-jōn-* 'she who chooses', which may in turn be traced back to the PGmc verb **keus-a-* (preterite 3pl **kuz-un*) attested e.g. by ON *kjós-a* 'to choose' (preterite 3pl *kur-u*) and OE *ċēos-an* 'id.' (preterite 3pl *cur-on*).

The PGmc verbal governing compound **wala-kuzjōn-* belongs to the same type with zero grade of the verbal root (m. **CC-jan-*, f. **CC-jōn-*; Casaretto 2004: 249) as Gothic *arbi-numja* 'heir, who takes the inheritance' (**°num-jan-* 'who takes', from **nem-a-* 'to take') and ON *erfi-nyti* 'heir, who enjoys the inheritance' (**°nut-jan-* 'who enjoys' from **neut-a-* 'to enjoy'). This is a productive type in Germanic (Meid 1967: 26) and most likely a very ancient one as well, which may have originated from the recharacterization of inherited Proto-Indo-European root compounds (Schindler 1972; Benedetti 1988; Scarlata 1999) by means of the suffixes m./f. **-alōn-* and **-jalōn-*.

The meaning 'to choose' of ON *kjósa* and OE *ċēosan* suggests a synchronic interpretation of the historical reflexes of PGmc **wala-kuzjōn-*, ON *val-kyrja* and OE *wæl-cyrġe*, as 'slain-chooser, she who chooses the slain on the battlefield'. This is strongly supported, at least for ON *valkyrja*, by the ON phrase *kjósa val* 'to choose the slain', which occurs with the Valkyries as subject in (14) above, partially repeated below as (20). The same phrase is also attested with the Einherjar as grammatical subject in (9) above, partially repeated below as (21), as well as with the love-goddess Freyja as subject in (22), matching the fact that in the OE version of Aldhelm's *De laude virginitatis* 47

only the name of the Roman love-goddess Venus is translated with OE *wælcyrġe*, whereas the generic *gydene* 'goddess' is used not only for this goddess but also for other female deities such as Vesta, Proserpina, the Nymphs and the Furies.

20. "**These are called valkyries**. Odin sends them to every battle. They allot death to men and govern victory. Gunn and Rota and the youngest norn, called Skuld, always ride to **choose who shall be slain** [***kjósa val***] and to govern the killings" (*Gylfaginning* 36).[23]
21. "All the Einheriar in Odin's courts […] **they choose the slain** [***val þeir kiósa***] and ride from the battle; then they sit the more at peace together" (*Vafþrúðnismál* 41).[24]
22. "Half **the slain** she [i.e. Freyja] **chooses** [*hálfan* ***val*** */ hon* ***kýss***] every day, and half Odin owns" (*Grímnismál* 14).[25]

Egeler's proposal that the Norse Valkyries originated as reflexes of Mediterranean female demons of death and battle, however, together with the great antiquity of the PGmc compound **wala-kuzjōn-* (as clear from the *Grammatischer Wechsel* attested by the Verner root variant **kuz-* vs. **keus-*) allow for the hypothesis that PGmc **wala-kuzjōn-* originally had another meaning, namely 'she who tastes the slain on the battlefield' (as already suggested by de Vries 1962: 641):

- the analysis of the first element would not be any different, whereas
- the meaning of second element would reflect the older semantics of the Proto-Indo-European root **ǵeu̯s-* 'to taste' (*LIV*[2]: 166–167) that also underlies PGmc **keus-*, a meaning that is directly attested or indirectly reflected by its cognates in other IE languages, e.g. Hittite *ku-kus-zi* 'taste', Ved. *joṣ-áya-* 'enjoy, take pleasure in', Ancient Greek γεύ-ο-μαι 'taste'.

While the meaning 'to taste' is not attested for the ON and OE verbs, it must have been inherited from Proto-Indo-European to

[23] Original text: ***Þessar heita valkyrjur***. *Þær sendir Óðinn til hverrar orrostu. Þær kjósa feigð á menn ok ráða sigri. Guðr ok Rota ok norn in yngsta er Skuld heitir ríða jafnan at* ***kjósa val*** *ok ráða vígum.*

[24] Original text: *Allir einheriar / Óðins túnom í /* […] ***val*** *þeir* ***kiósa*** */ oc ríða vígi frá.*

[25] Original text: *hálfan* ***val*** */ hon* ***kýss*** *hverian dag / enn hálfan / Óðinn á.*

Proto-Germanic, as it still occurs in Gothic, where the verb *kausjan* (reflex of an iterative PGmc formation **kaus-ja-*) is clearly used with the sense 'to taste' to translate Ancient Greek γεύομαι in (23).

23. "For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden **shall taste** of my supper [***kauseiþ*** *þis nahtamatis meinis* = **γεύσεταί** μου τοῦ δείπνου]" (*Luke* 14:24).[26]

While Norse Valkyries are never described as corpse-eaters (Egeler 2011: 83), the reconstruction of an original meaning 'slain-taster, she who tastes the slain' for the PGmc compound **wala-kuzjōn-* may find some comparative support in a very similar term for a carrion-eating bird with which Valkyries were closely associated: the raven, which in (24) is referred to by means of the OE compound *wæl-cēasiġa*. This term is almost identical to OE *wæl-cyrġe* and ON *val-kyrja*: it attests the same first element *wæl°*, as well as a second element, *°cēas-iġa*, that reflects a weak masculine agent noun **°kaus-jan-* 'taster, chooser' (although we are most likely dealing here with a late remodeling of an older formation, as suggested by the absence of *i*-Umlaut in the root). The latter almost exactly matches the weak feminine **°kuz-jōn-* underlying ON *°kyr-ja* and OE *°cyr-ġe*, the only difference between them being the grammatical gender (masculine **-jan-* vs feminine **-jōn-*) and the apophonic grade of the PGmc root (full-grade **kaus-* in **°kaus-jan-* vs. zero-grade **kuz-* in **°kuz-jōn-*). As a literal meaning of 'slain-chooser' would make no sense to refer to a raven, 'slain-taster' is the most likely semantic interpretation of this OE compound, which must thus be identified as a further fossil reflex of the inherited semantics 'to taste' of this PIE root in a Germanic language.

24. "The warbirds cried, eager for battle, dew-feathered ones over the bodies of the slain troops, the dark **taster of the slain** [***wælceasega***]" (*Exodus* 158).[27]

4. From corpse-tasting demons to man-choosing maidens

If the original meaning of PGmc **wala-kuzjōn-* was indeed 'slain-taster', however, a question arises: how did the Valkyries end up

[26] Original text: *qiþa allis izwis þatei ni ainshun manne jainaize þize faura haitanane* ***kauseiþ*** *þis nahtamatis meinis*.

[27] Original text: *Hreopon herefugolas, hilde grædige, / deawigfeðere ofer drihtneum, / wonn* ***wælceasega***.

becoming pleasant and fascinating 'choosers of the slain' as we know them from Norse mythology? This change required (as a *terminus post quem*) the semantic shift of PGmc **keus-* from 'taste' to 'choose', as attested in Old Norse and Old English, where the meaning 'to choose' seems to have definitely replaced 'to taste' (still attested in Gothic, with a fossil reflex in Old English, as just seen). This late semantic shift allowed for the reinterpretation of **wala-kuzjōn-* 'slain-taster' as 'slain-chooser', prompting an association of these female death-demons with two distinct but interconnected themes of IE heritage: (4.1) the social institution of "own-choice" marriage and (4.2) the corresponding mythological theme of the "own-choice" marriage of Heavenly Maidens.

4.1. Choosing a man as husband in Germanic and Indo-European

Once PGmc **keus-a-* 'to taste' had acquired the meaning 'to choose', the (once-gruesome) semantics of the compound **wala-kuz-jōn-* '(female) slain-taster' could be reinterpreted as '(female) slain-chooser'. The latter, however, given that SLAIN WARRIORS were most likely MEN at the time, could also be understood as 'she who chooses the slain men', and thus linked to an inherited Germanic formula [WOMAN – CHOOSE (**keusa-*) – MAN as HUSBAND (**wira-*) – (for HERSELF)],[28] which may be reconstructed on the basis of its (etymologically identical) reflexes in Old Norse and Old English, namely:

- the ON phrase [WOMAN – CHOOSE (*kjósa*) – MAN as HUSBAND (*verr*) – (for HERSELF)], as in (25)–(26);
- the OE phrase [WOMAN – CHOOSE ([*ġe*]*ċēosan*) – MAN as HUSBAND (*wer*) – (for HERSELF)], as in (27)–(29).

25. "Who would **you choose as husband for yourself** [***þú þér at ver kjósa***]?" (Kormákr Ǫgmundarson *Lausavísur* 19V, *Kormáks saga* 20).[29]
26. "**She** [i.e. **the goddess Skaði**] was to **choose herself a man [as husband]** [***hon skal kjósa sér mann***] out of the Æsir and choose by the feet and see nothing else of them. Then she

[28] Formulas and collocations in general are represented here according to the system [SEMANTIC.ELEMENT (*corresponding.lexemes*) – semantic/syntactic.relationship SEMANTIC.ELEMENT (*corresponding.lexemes*)], for which see e.g. García Ramón 2021; Ginevra 2021a, 2023.

[29] Original text: *Hvern myndir* ***þú*** […] ***þér*** *at* ***ver kjósa****?*

saw one person's feet that were exceptionally beautiful and said: '**I choose that one** [***Penna kýs ek***]; there can be little that is ugly about Baldr.' But it was Njǫrðr of Noatun" (*Skáldskaparmál* G56).[30]

27. "Each [widow] shall stay 12 months **without husband** [***werleas***]; then **she shall choose whom she wants [as husband]**" [***ceose*** *syððan* ***þæt heo sylf wille***] (*Aethelred's Laws*, 37 21.1 Liebermann).[31]
28. "If **she chooses a man [as husband]** [***wer geceose***] within a year" (L. TH. 416,8).[32]
29. "Either they came back or **they** would **choose** other **men [as husbands] for themselves** [***hi him*** *wolde oðerra* ***wera ceosan***]" (Old English *Orosius* 1, 10.29.7).[33]

It may be worth noting here that OE *oðerra wera ceosan* 'choose other men [as husbands]' from the last (29), an OE translation of Paulus Orosius' *Historiae adversum paganos*, has no counterpart in the Latin original, and was thus introduced by the translator, by whom it must have been perceived as idiomatic.[34]

A similar situation is that of the following (30), a series of five occurrences of the phrase *wer* (*ġe*)*ċēosan* in the Old English translation of the Late Latin romance *Apollonius of Tyre*: within these passages, OE *wer* (*ġe*)*ċēosan* 'to choose a man (as husband)' is used twice to literally translate Latin *marītum ēligere* 'id.', but it is also used twice to simply translate Latin *nūbere* 'to marry'; furthermore, in its last occurrence, OE *wer* (*ġe*)*ċēosan* actually has no counterpart in the Latin original, just like in (29), once more suggesting that the phrase must have been used by OE speakers as an idiomatic expression (although the possibility that the OE translation may be based on a slightly different version of the romance must be taken into account as well).

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[30] Original text: ***hon*** *skal* ***kjósa sér mann*** *af Ásum ok kjósa at fótum ok sjá ekki fleira af. Þá sá hon eins manns fœtr forkunnar fagra ok mælir: '"****Penna kýs ek****, fátt mun ljótt á Baldri." 'En þat var Njǫrðr ór Nóatúnum.*

[31] Original text: *sitte ælc* [*wydewe*] *XII monað* ***werleas; ceose*** *syððan* ***þæt heo sylf wille****.*

[32] Original text: *gif* ***heo*** *binnan geares fæce* ***wer geceose****.*

[33] Original text: *oþþe ham come oþþe* ***hi him*** *wolde oðerra* ***wera ceosan****.*

[34] The original Latin has *ni redeant subolem se a finitimis quaesituras* "if they didn't come back they would seek offspring from the neighbouring men" (Oros. 1.14).

30. Old English *Apollonius of Tyre* 27–28:

Latin original	OE translation	Translation of OE version
propter quod hodie una simul venimus. ***Elige*** *ex nobis quem vis habere generum.*	*27. nu bidde we þe þæt þu* ***gece-ose*** *þe ænne of us þrym. hwilcne þu wille þe to aðume habban*	"Now we ask you that you **choose** yourself one of us three, whom you will have as your son-in-law
[…] *et illa sibi* ***eligat*** *quem voluerit habere* ***maritum***	[…] *þæt heo sylf* ***geceose*** *hwilcne eower heo wille*	[…] and she herself shall **choose** which of you she will
[…] *'Magister Apolloni, ita tibi non dolet, quod ego* ***nubam****?'*	*28. […] Lāreow. ne ofþincð hit ðe gif ic þus* ***wer geceose****?*	[…] Master, will it not vex you if I thus **choose a husband**?
[…] *'deo volente et cui animus tuus desiderat* ***nubas****.'*	[…] *min willa is þæt þu ðe* ***wer geceose*** *þar ðu silf wille.*	[…] My will is that you **choose** yourself **a husband** where you yourself desire.
[…] *'Bone rex et pater optime, quoniam dementiae tuae indulgentia permittis mihi, dicam: illum volo coniugem naufragio patrimonio deceptum.'*	[…] *Ðu goda cyngc & min se leofesta fæder. nu þin mildheortnes me leafe sealde þæt ic silf moste* ***ceosan*** *hwilcne* ***wer*** *ic wolde. ic secge ðe to soðan þone forlidenan man ic wille.*	[…] Thou good king, and my most beloved father, now that thy tenderness hath given me leave that I myself might **choose** what **husband** I would, I will say to thee in sooth that I desire the shipwrecked man."

The ON and OE reflexes of the inherited Germanic collocation [WOMAN – CHOOSE (**keusa*-) – MAN as HUSBAND (**wira*-) – (for HERSELF)] thus seem to have been used as a technical formula to refer to a marriage in which the woman apparently had some say in the choice of male (as in the case of widows), a relatively peculiar type of marriage in most IE-speaking communities, whose social systems were highly patriarchal.

As noted by Dumézil (1973: 33) with regard to (26) – in which the goddess Skaði 'chooses a husband for herself' – this liberal procedure closely resembles the Indic tradition of the *svayaṃ-vara* 'own-choice' wedding, as attested e.g. in (31), where the princess Sukanya must *svakaṃ patiṃ vr̥-* 'choose her own husband' among three characters who look exactly the same.

> 31. "A little while later they all climbed out of the lake, all young and divinely beautiful, with shining earrings, wearing the same outward appearance. And increasing the love of her heart, they all said to her, 'Beautiful young woman, **choose** [***vr̥ṇīṣva***] one of us **for marriage** [***patitve***], whomever you desire.' When she saw them all stand there looking the same, the princess decided with heart and mind, and **chose her very own husband** [***vavre svakaṃ patim***]" (*Mahābhārata* 3.123.17–3.123.19).[35]

The own-choice marriage formula [WOMAN – CHOOSE (**keusa-*) – MAN as HUSBAND (**wira-*) – (for HERSELF)] attested in ON and OE texts may thus be identified as a Germanic counterpart to the (already Vedic) Sanskrit *svayaṃvara* formula [WOMAN – CHOOSE (*vr̥-*) – MAN as HUSBAND (*páti-*) – (for HERSELF)], whose traditional and ritual character has been demonstrated by Jamison (2001). Once the PGmc verb **keus-a-* acquired the innovative semantics 'to choose', the feminine compound **wala-kuzjōn-* may have easily been linked to this own-choice marriage formula and correspondingly reinterpreted as 'she who chooses the slain (as husband for herself)'. This would explain why, in heroic poetry as well as in legendary texts, Valkyries are often said to be lovers of male heroes who are fated to die, as in the famous Valkyrie-hero couples Sigrún–Helgi, Sváva–Helgi and Sigrdrífa–Sigurðr.

4.2. The IE mythological theme of the "own-choice" marriage of Heavenly Maidens

The reinterpretation of the compound **wala-kuzjōn-* as 'she who chooses the slain (as husband for herself)' may also explain why

[35] Original text: *tato muhūrtād uttīrṇāḥ sarve te sarasas tataḥ / divyarūpadharāḥ sarve yuvāno mr̥ṣṭakuṇḍalāḥ / tulyarūpadharāś caiva manasaḥ prītivardhanāḥ / te 'bruvan sahitā sarve vr̥ṇīṣvānya tamaṃ śubhe / asmākam īpsitaṃ bhadre* ***patitve*** *varavarṇini / yatra vāpy abhikāmāsi taṃ* ***vr̥ṇīṣva*** *suśobhane / sā samīkṣya tu tān sarvāṃs tulyarūpadharān sthitān / niścitya manasā buddhyā devī* ***vavre svakaṃ patim****.*

Valkyries developed from death-demons into heavenly maidens, being referred to as [MAIDENS – of ODIN] in Old Norse (as in (32)).[36]

32. "Now **Herjann's [i.e. Odin's] maidens** are counted up, **valkyries** ready to ride over the earth" (*Vǫluspá* 30.9–30.12).[37]

Since in many respects Odin is a Norse counterpart to IE sky-gods (see e.g. West 2007: 173; Ginevra 2020b: 7–57), this aspect of the Valkyries may be linked to the fact that, within IE mythology, "own-choice" marriage seems to be a peculiar feature of "Heavenly Maidens", i.e. daughters of the Sun-god or Sky-god, such as the Vedic Sanskrit goddess Sūryā and the Ancient Greek heroine Helen.

The "husband-chooser" par excellence of Vedic myth, as famously noted by Jamison (2001), is the sun-maiden called *Sūryā-* (lit. 'She-Sun'), also known as the "Daughter of the Sun" (most likely just an aspect of Dawn, originally):[38] according to passages like (33), she *āvr̥ṇīta yuvā́m pátī* 'chose you two [i.e. the two Aśvins] as husbands'.

33. "Having come **to marriage [*patitvā́ṁ*]** to you for a partnership with you, the noble **young girl [Sūryā] chose you two [Aśvins] as her husbands [*avr̥ṇīta yuvā́m pátī*]**" (*Rigveda* 1.119.5cd)[39]

In her contribution, Jamison (2001: 313–314) also draws attention to further thematic and phraseological parallels between Sūryā's own-choice wedding and the wedding of Helen, the only mortal daughter of the Greek sky-god Zeus and most likely a sun-maiden (cf. West 2007: 230–232), whose wedding may be analyzed as a *svayaṃ-vara-* 'own-choice' procedure as well, given that Helen's earthly father Tyndareus allowed her to ἐλέσθαι μνηστήρων ἕνα 'choose one of the suitors', as in (34).

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[36] Cf. also the VALKYRIE-kennings *Yggs drós* "maid of Yggr" (*Háttatal* 501) and *Fjǫlnis mær* "maiden of Fjǫlnir" (Stephanius' *Notæ uberiores*, 79–80; Egeler 2011: 48; *Yggr* and *Fjǫlnir* are names of Odin as well).

[37] Original text: *nú ero talðar / **nǫnnor Herians**, / gorvar at ríða / grund, **valkyrior**.*

[38] I follow Jamison (1991: 294) – as well as several other scholars (e.g., McCone 2020: 154; Janda 2005: 347) – in assuming that the Vedic "Daughter of the Sun" Sūryā must have originally been an epithet of Dawn. Even though Sūryā has become a character of its own in the RV, there is at least one passage (RV 7.75.5) that strongly supports her identification with Dawn, where the latter is called *sū́riyasya yóṣā* "maiden of the Sun" (West 2007: 234).

[39] Original text: *ā́ vām **patitvā́ṁ** sakhiyā́ya jagmúṣī / yóṣā**āvr̥ṇīta** jéniyā **yuvā́m pátī**.*

34. "He (Tyndareus) allowed his daughter (Helen) to **choose one of the suitors [ἑλέσθαι μνηστήρων ἕνα]**, him to whom the sweet breezes of Aphrodite were carrying her. **She chose Menelaus [ἡ δ᾽ εἵλεθ᾽… Μενέλαον]**, and how I wish she had never chosen him!" (Euripides, *Iphigenia at Aulis* 68–71)[40]

These two IE examples of mythological own-choice marriage are extremely relevant to the topic of this investigation: in the passages (33)–(34) quoted above, both the Vedic sun-maiden Sūryā and the Greek daughter of the sky-god Helen may be regarded as acting like Valkyries, as they "choose as husbands for themselves" characters who were originally not divine: the chosen husbands of Sūryā, the Aśvins, were originally considered too close to the human beings by the gods (35), who only admitted them among themselves after a quite literal exchange of favors (36), whereas Helen's chosen husband Menelaus was actually born mortal and was able to avoid death exclusively thanks to his wife, as seen above in (10), repeated here as (37).

35. "The seer [Cyavana] himself answered them [i.e. the Aśvins]: 'In Kurukṣetra yonder the gods perform a sacrifice and exclude you two from it: in that respect you are **incomplete**, in that respect **imperfect**!' And the Aśvins departed forthwith, and came to the gods, as they were performing a sacrifice, after the chanting of the Bahiṣpavamāna. They said: 'Invite us thereto!' **The gods said: 'We will not invite you: you have wandered and mixed much among men, performing cures**'" (*Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* 4.1.5.13–4.1.5.14).[41]
36. "They [i.e. the Aśvins] said: 'But surely ye worship with a headless sacrifice!', 'How with a headless [sacrifice]?', 'Nay, invite us, and we will tell you!', 'So be it!', so they [i.e. the gods] invited them [i.e. the Aśvins]. They drew this Āśvina cup for them; **and those two [Aśvins] became the Adhvaryu**

[40] Original text: δίδωσ᾽ **ἑλέσθαι** θυγατρὶ **μνηστήρων ἕνα**, / ὅποι πνοαὶ φέροιεν Ἀφροδίτης φίλαι. / **ἡ δ᾽ εἵλεθ᾽**, ὅς σφε μήποτ᾽ ὤφελεν λαβεῖν, / **Μενέλαον**.

[41] Original text: *tau há ṛṣir eva práty uvāca kurukṣetrè 'mí devā́ yajñáṃ tanvate té vāṃ yajñā́d antáryanti tena*ā́***sarvau*** *sthas tena*ā́***samṛddhāv*** *íti taú ha táta evà́śvínau préyatus tāv ā́jagmatur devā́n yajñáṃ tanvānā́nt stúte bahiṣpavamāné. taú hocatuḥ úpa nau hvayadhvam íti* ***té ha devā́ ūcur ná vām úpahvayiṣyāmahe bahú manuṣyèṣu sáṃsṛṣṭam acāriṣtam bhiṣajyántāv iti***.

priests of the sacrifice, and restored the head of the sacrifice" (*Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* 4.1.5.15).[42]

37. "But for yourself, **Menelaus**, fostered by Zeus, it is not ordained that you should die and meet your fate in horse-pasturing Argos, but **to the Elysian plain and the ends of the earth will the immortals convey you**, where dwells fair-haired Rhadamanthus, and **where life is easiest for men**. No snow is there, nor heavy storm, nor ever rain, but always Ocean sends up blasts of the shrill-blowing West Wind that they may give cooling to men; **for you have Helen to wife, and are in their eyes the son-in-law of Zeus**" (*Odyssey* 4.561–4.569).[43]

These two Indic and Greek narratives find parallels in (26) above, where the Norse goddess Skaði is also said to have performed an "own-choice' marriage, more precisely with Njǫrðr, another mythological character who did not number among the gods originally, and only came to be admitted among them later on in his life, as told in (38). In the same passage of Snorri's *Edda* where Skaði's "own-choice" procedure is told, the goddess is also described as a warrior-maiden, highly reminiscent of the Valkyries (39).

38. "**Njǫrðr is not of the race of the gods**. He was brought up in the land of the Vanir, but the Vanir gave him as hostage to the gods" (*Gylfaginning* 23).[44]
39. "**But Skaði, daughter of giant Þjazi, took helmet and mail-coat and all weapons of war and went to Asgard to avenge her father.** But the Æsir offered her atonement and compensation, the first item of which was that she was to choose herself a husband out of the Æsir" (*Skaldskaparmál* G56).[45]

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[42] Original text: *taú hocatuḥ víśīrṣṇā vaí yajñéna yajadhva íti kathaṃ víśīrṣṇety úpa nu nau hvayadhvam átha vo vakṣyāva íti tathéti tā úpāhvayanta tā́bhyām etám āśvinaṃ graham agṛhṇas* ***tā́v adhvaryū́ yajñásyābhavatāṃ tā́v etád yajñásya śíraḥ prátyadhattāṃ****.*

[43] Original text: σοὶ δ᾽ οὐ θέσφατόν ἐστι, διοτρεφὲς ὦ **Μενέλαε**, / Ἄργει ἐν ἱπποβότῳ θανέειν καὶ πότμον ἐπισπεῖν, / ἀλλά **σ᾽ ἐς Ἠλύσιον πεδίον καὶ πείρατα γαίης / ἀθάνατοι πέμψουσιν,** ὅθι ξανθὸς Ῥαδάμανθυς, / **τῇ περ ῥηίστη βιοτὴ πέλει ἀνθρώποισιν·** / οὐ νιφετός, οὔτ᾽ ἂρ χειμὼν πολὺς οὔτε ποτ᾽ ὄμβρος, / ἀλλ᾽ αἰεὶ Ζεφύροιο λιγὺ πνείοντος ἀήτας / Ὠκεανὸς ἀνίησιν ἀναψύχειν ἀνθρώπους· / **οὕνεκ᾽ ἔχεις Ἑλένην καί σφιν γαμβρὸς Διός ἐσσι.**

[44] Original text: ***Eigi er Njǫrðr Ása ættar****. Hann var upp fœddr í Vanaheimum, en Vanir gísluðu hann goðunum ok tóku í mót at Ásagíslingu.*

[45] Original text: '*En Skaði, dóttir Þjaza jǫtuns, tók hjálm ok brynju ok ǫll hervápn ok ferr til Ásgarðs at hefna fǫður síns. En Æsir buðu henni sætt ok yfirbœtr, ok hit fyrsta at hon skal kjósa sér mann af Ásum.*

As shown by these correspondences between the marriages of the Aśvins, Menelaus, and Njǫrðr (as well as several others), the luck of being "chosen" by a Heavenly Maiden (or by a goddess in general) seems to be often combined with the luck of becoming immortal and/or inhabiting a paradisal afterlife. This frequent association between a divine "own-choice" wife and a "Valhǫll-type" afterlife may also be the reason why the Ancient Greek passage (12) above, repeated below as (40), not only mentions the hero Achilles as spending the afterlife in the paradisal White Island but also has him married to Helen in place of Menelaus. According to a further – apparently puzzling – tradition (Cingano 2023: 33–37),[46] dating at least from the 6th century BCE but prominently attested in a later passage of Apollonius of Rhodes' *Argonautica* (41), in the paradisal Elysian plain Achilles is destined to be married to Medea, daughter of Aeetes and granddaughter of the Greek sun-god Helios (and thus – at least genealogically – a Heavenly Maiden).

40. "In time he was healed and returned **from White Island, where, he used to declare, he saw Achilles**, as well as Ajax the son of Oileus and Ajax the son of Telamon. With them, he said, were Patroclus and Antilochus; **Helen was wedded to Achilles**" (Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 3.19.13).[47]
41. "When **your son [i.e. Achilles] comes to the Elysian field** – he whom the Naiads are now tending in the dwelling of Cheiron the Centaur, though he longs for your milk – it is his fate to be **the husband of Aeetes' daughter, Medea**" (Apollonius of Rhodes, *Argonautica* 4.811–4.815).[48]

I propose that these Heavenly Maidens and their originally non-divine "chosen" lovers, attested in several IE traditions, reflect the same inherited IE mythological theme that also developed into the Valkyries and their "chosen" heroes within the Norse tradition. While the semantic shift of the PGmc verb **keus-a-* from 'to taste' to 'to choose' may explain

[46] I am grateful to Laura Massetti for suggesting this parallel to me.

[47] Original text: χρόνῳ δὲ ὡς ὑγιάνας ἐπανῆλθεν **ἐκ τῆς Λευκῆς, ἰδεῖν μὲν ἔφασκεν Ἀχιλλέα,** ἰδεῖν δὲ τὸν Ὀιλέως καὶ τὸν Τελαμῶνος Αἴαντα, συνεῖναι δὲ καὶ Πάτροκλόν σφισι καὶ Ἀντίλοχον· **Ἑλένην δὲ Ἀχιλλεῖ μὲν συνοικεῖν.**

[48] Original text: εὖτ᾽ ἂν **ἐς Ἠλύσιον πεδίον τεὸς υἱὸς ἵκηται**, / ὃν δὴ νῦν Χείρωνος ἐν ἤθεσι Κενταύροιο / νηιάδες κομέουσι τεοῦ λίπτοντα γάλακτος, / χρειώ **μιν κούρης πόσιν ἔμμεναι Αἰήταο / Μηδείης.**

why PGmc **wala-kuzjōn-* (most likely originally meaning 'slain-taster' and referring to a female death-demon of the Mediterranean type) eventually came to mean 'slain-chooser', further aspects of the mythology of the Valkyries are best explained as the result of convergence with the IE theme of the Heavenly Maiden's own-choice marriage with a worthy hero, accepted among the gods after death.

5. Conclusion: love is the only cure for death – or why you should marry into a divine family

The results of this investigation may be summarized as follows. Textual traditions in Old Norse and in other historical IE languages attest two main models of the afterlife:

1. An undesirable afterlife, based on the idea that DEATH is the opposite of LIFE, where the DEAD are not able to perform any activities linked with life (EATING, STANDING, SEEING), and where they also have NO SOCIAL RELATIONS at all – the "Old Norse *Hel*" type.
2. A desirable afterlife, where several aspects of LIFE are recreated or even improved upon (e.g. EATING and DRINKING), and where SOCIAL RELATIONS are indeed possible – the "Old Norse *Valhǫll*" type.

Valkyries were – and still are in contemporary popular culture – a fundamental element of the paradisal Norse afterlife, Valhǫll. This may have not always been the case, however: as argued by Egeler (2011), the Valkyries most likely developed from a Mediterranean belief in monstrous she-demons associated with DEATH, BATTLE, CARRION-BIRDS, which also underlies well-known Celtic and classical figures such as the Irish Bodbs, the Greek Sirens, the Roman Furies and the Etruscan Vanth.

Even though ON *val-kyrja* was clearly synchronically interpreted (e.g. by the Icelandic mythographer Snorri Sturluson) as 'slain-chooser, she who chooses the slain' (its second element being analyzed as an agentive noun linked to ON *kjósa* 'to choose', pret. 3pl *kuru* 'they chose'), in view of the Valkyries' likely origin as female death-demons it is at least conceivable that the ancient compound **wala-kuzjōn-* (underlying both ON *val-kyrja* and OE *wæl-cyrġe*) originally meant 'slain-taster', displaying the inherited semantics of the Proto-Indo-European

root **ǵeu̯s-* 'to taste' (as still attested by Gothic *kausjan*). An almost exact match for this reconstruction would be the OE compound *wæl-cēasiġa* 'slain-taster' (**wala-kausjan-*), referring to the 'raven', a bird closely associated with the Valkyries (but unlikely to be a "chooser" of slain heroes).

As is well known, however, the Valkyries eventually developed from slain-tasting she-demons into splendid warrior-women, who are frequently mentioned as lovers of mortal heroes in poetic and mythological sources: after the semantic shift of PGmc **keus-a-* from 'to taste' to 'to choose', the fact that SLAIN WARRIORS were mostly MEN allowed for a reinterpretation of **wala-kuzjōn-* as 'she who chooses the slain (as husband for herself)', by convergence with the technical formula of "own-choice" marriages in Germanic, [WOMAN – CHOOSE (**keus-a-*) – MAN as HUSBAND (**wir-a-*) – (for HERSELF)], well attested in both Old Norse (with *kjósa* and *verr*) and Old English (with *ċēosan* and *wer*), and with quite close counterparts in several other IE traditions, such as the Indic and the Greek ones.

In the latter two traditions, "own-choice" marriages seem to have been a peculiar feature of mythological "Heavenly Maidens", such as the Vedic Sanskrit daughter of the sun-god, the sun-maiden Sūryā, and the Ancient Greek daughter of the sky-god, Helen of Troy. Within their respective traditions, these Heavenly Maidens were literally said to "have chosen as husbands for themselves" characters who were originally not divine and who were accepted only later among the gods: Sūryā chose the two Aśvins (originally regarded as incomplete and imperfect by the gods because they spent too much time among mortals) and Helen chose the hero Menelaus (a mortal).

This mythological theme about Heavenly Maidens literally "choosing" originally non-divine characters as husbands for themselves, who consequently get to live with them in heaven forever, may thus be reflected in Norse mythology by the Valkyries, who are both Heavenly Maidens (described in the kennings as "maidens of Odin", the supreme god and in many respects a Norse counterpart to IE sky-gods) and literal "choosers" of noble dead warriors (the Einherjar) who get to live with them in Valhǫll. The same inherited IE motif may also underlie the "own-choice" marriage of the Norse warrior-maiden Skaði (a Valkyrie-like divine character), who in Old Norse texts is said to have (inadvertently) chosen as her own husband Njǫrðr, a character who was not a member of the main divine clan (the Æsir) by birth. It must

be noted that, while passages like (39) describe Skaði as the daughter of a giant (Þjazi), she is also listed among the female members of the Æsir (Faulkes 2007a: 114) and referred to as "the shining bride of the gods" (*Grímnismál* 11.5). Further research may thus attempt to analyze Skaði's mythology within the "IE Heavenly Maiden" framework proposed in this contribution, as well as investigate how the ON phrase *kjósa val* 'to choose the slain' (originally a "own-choice" marriage formula apparently reserved to women) eventually came to be used with the male warriors Einherjar and with the love-goddess Freyja as grammatical subjects, as seen above (21)–(22).

In addition to the Greek-Indic parallels noted by Jamison (2001: 313–314; cf. also Janda 2005: 346–348), the reconstruction of IE mythological themes involving "own-choice" marriage of a Heavenly Maiden has already been proposed by McCone (2020: 137–143) with regard to a sovereignty myth mainly attested in Ancient Greek, Old Indic and Old Irish. One of the main proposals of this study, however, is that a Proto-Indo-European "own-choice" marriage procedure may be reconstructed not only on the basis of thematic (i.e. mythological) data (as already argued by McCone) but also of linguistic (i.e. phraseological) material, given that the same formulaic phrase [WOMAN – CHOOSE – MAN as HUSBAND – (for HERSELF)] evoking the "own-choice" marriage procedure is attested in at least three IE branches: Germanic (Old Norse and Old English), Indic and Ancient Greek.

Finally, I hope to have shown that analyzing and comparing IE linguistic structures dealing with the "love life" – and existential conditions in general – of the dead in the afterlife may be a powerful means to learn more about IE customs and social institutions for the living. For instance, one is left to wonder whether the idea that marriage into the heavenly family was the only way for mortals to get into a paradisal afterlife may have mirrored real-life conceptions of social mobility,[49] which may have allowed lower-born warriors to achieve a better social standing through marriage with a higher-status "own-choosing" woman. At least for the time being, however, only the dead know the answer to this question.

[49] On this issue, see McCone's (2020: 140) scepticism (with respect to myths that may be defined as "sovereignty myths", which is not always the case with myths discussed in this contribution).

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8. Tied to the underworld

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Abstract

One of the common Indo-Europeans ideas of afterlife is the notion that the deceased person is wrapped or covered and somehow tied to the underworld. The present chapter investigates this concept in a linguistic, mythological and archaeological context with special reference to the Proto-Indo-European roots *$sh_2a\underline{i}$- 'bind', also magically, and *$\underline{u}elh\underline{u}$- 'wrap, cover' as mirrored by burial practices of early Indo-European societies.

1. Introduction

A peculiar feature of what seems to be a common Indo-European view of afterlife is the idea that the deceased person is wrapped or covered and somehow tied to the underworld.[1] These concepts, which may be corroborated by linguistic and possibly also archaeological evidence, are commonly, if not exclusively, expressed by derivatives of three inherited roots:

1. (*$sh_2e\underline{i}$-) > *$sh_2a\underline{i}$- or *$sah_2\underline{i}$-, zero-grade *sh_2i- > *sih_2- 'tie, bind' (*LIV*²: 544–545 with addendum; Rasmussen 1989: 59–60)
2. *deh_1- 'bind' (*LIV*²: 102–103) and
3. *$\underline{u}elh\underline{u}$-, zero-grade *$\underline{u}lhu$- > *$\underline{u}luh$-, 'enclose, cover' and 'roll' (*LIV*²: 674–675; Rasmussen 1989: 99–100; Rasmussen 2011).[2]

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[2] The quality of the laryngeal is uncertain, depending on the precise analysis of Gk. εἰλέω 'roll, turn, wind, revolve', cf. Frisk I, 457–458, Beekes 2010: 384, Chantraine 2009: 304–305.

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2. The root *$sh_2a\underline{i}$-

A root (*$sh_2e\underline{i}$- >) *$sh_2a\underline{i}$- with zero-grade *sh_2i- > *sih_2- 'tie, bind' is attested as what may be a reduplicated present in CLuw. 3.pl. *$\underline{h}$isḫi$\underline{i}$anti* 'bind', Hitt. *išḫi$\underline{i}$anzi* 'bind, tie',[3] a nasal present in Ved. *sināti* 'ties', Lith. dial. *sienù* 'bind', and a perfect in Ved. *á siṣāya*, Av. *ā-hišāiiā* 'holds tied up'.[4]

Besides the literal sense of 'bind, tie', a metaphorical meaning, 'bind by magic', must be attributed to the proto-language as argued by Janda (2000: 119); cf. e.g. HLuw. *hišhiš-* 'spell' from *'binding' (Melchert 2001a: 70).

An agent noun *$sh_2a\underline{i}$-tér- > Ved. *setár-* 'binder', used as an instrument noun 'bond' in a metaphorical sense, is found in RV 7.84.2 (Indra and Varuṇa):

> *yuvó rāṣṭrám bṛhád invati dyaúr yaú* ***setṛ́bhir*** *arajjúbhiḥ* ***sinītháḥ***
> *pári no héḷo váruṇasya vṛjyā urúṃ na índrah kṛṇavad u lokám*
>
> Heaven speeds the lofty rule of your two, who **bind** with ropeless **bonds**. Might the anger of Varuṇa avoid us. Indra will make a wide, wide world for us.[5]

Characteristically, both *setṛ́bhir* and the corresponding verb *sinīthá$\underline{h}$* are associated with the god Varuṇa, feared by men for his fetters, which he uses to bind those who transgress the divine commandments.

This agent noun in turn is the basis of the well-attested instrument noun *$sh_2a\underline{i}$-tlo/ah_2- in ON *seil* 'rope', OE *sál* 'rope, tether', Germ. *Seil* 'rope, noose', Latv. *saiklis* (m) 'string, band'. A remarkable semantic development is common to Italic and Celtic; cf. Lat. *saeculum* 'generation, lifetime', W *hoedl* 'lifespan, age'. Here the underlying idea may be that of the 'thread of life', spun by the (predecessors of) the Moirai/Parcae/Norns. The Slavic comparanda have zero grade in the root, *sh_2i-tlo/ah_2- > *sih_2-tlo/ah_2- in OCS *silo*, Pol. *sidło/-a* 'noose, snare'.

From a nominal derivative of the *to*-participle, *$sh_2a\underline{i}$-to- or *$sh_2o\underline{i}$-to-, we find Lith. *saĩtas* 'tie, leash, cord', but also 'magic' and

[3] The morphological interpretation is somewhat uncertain. According to Rasmussen (1989: 36), the proto-form is *$sh_2(i)\underline{i}e/o$-, which means that the initial *$\underline{h}$*- of the Luwian form must be secondary, while Melchert (1984: 111) assumes a reduplicated *h_2i-sh_2i- with dissimilation in Hittite. Cf. also Kloekhorst 2008: 391–393.

[4] Cf. also *LIV*^{2} addenda and Cheung 2007: 137 on Iranian evidence.

[5] Translations of the *Rig Veda* by Jamison and Brereton 2014.

OCS *sětь* 'snare, trap', identical with W *hud* 'magic' and ON *seiðr* 'spell, charm, oath', especially denoting a particular sort of magic or witchcraft carried out with a *seiðrstafr*. ON also has the corresponding verb *síða* 'work charms' < **sih₂ite/o-* < **sih₂te/o-*, and it is noteworthy that Odin, whose functional range is in many ways similar to that of Varuṇa, was the master of *seiðr*. This fits well with the fact that the closely related Vedic *tu*-stem *sétu-* 'band', is a characteristic feature of (Mitra and) Varuṇa, thus e.g. RV 7.65.3:

> *tā́* ***bhū́ripāśāv*** *ánṛtasya* ***sétū*** *duratyétū ripáve mártyāya*
> *ṛtásya mitrāvaruṇā pathā́ vām apó ná nā́vā duritā́ tarema*
>
> These two have **many fetters**, are **bonds** for untruth, and are hard to overcome for the cheating mortal.
> By your path of truth, Mitra and Varuṇa, we would cross over difficulties, as [we would] waters by a boat.

Similarly RV 8.67.8 (Ādityas – including Varuṇa, the foremost āditya of all, and Mitra):

> *mā́ naḥ sétuḥ siṣed ayám*
>
> Let this fetter here not bind us

The formal identity between Ved. *sétu-* and OIr. *saeth* (*u*-st.) 'disease, illness' suggests that the idea that disease is caused by magic binding goes back to at least Core Indo-European.

An extended root form root **sh₂aiu̯-* seems to be continued in Ved. *sévate* 'remain at sth., be tied up with sth., be attached to sby' (*LIV*²: 544; *EWAia* II: 747; Gotō 1987: 328–330) or simply 'bind', often used in the sense of 'binding by magic' with the aim of causing disease as elaborated by Janda (2000: 69–138) with an abundant collection of material, also including other roots with the basic meaning 'bind'. In conclusion, it is unnecessary to assume two homonymous roots **sh₂ai̯-*.[6]

Thus, the thematic stem **sh₂aiu̯o-* (Janda 2000: 119) would have undergone a semantic development from 'bound by magic' to '"krank", "schmerzend", "leidvoll", "rasend", "grausig"', whence Lat. *saevus* 'harsh, savage, ferocious' beside the **-ro-* derivative **sh₂ai̯ro-* > Goth. *sair* 'pain', ON *sár* 'wound', pain, illness'.

[6] Cf. also de Vaan (2008: 534): "Since 'to rage' an[d] 'to be in pain' are sometimes expressed by means of 'to be tied, to be controlled by an outer force', it is conceivable that the PIE root **sh₂i-* 'to rage, be in pain' is ultimately the same as **sh₂i-* 'to tie'".

This leads Janda (2000: 114–121) to a lengthy discussion of the Greek consonant stem Ἄϊδ-, gen. Ἄϊδος (usually gen. for 'Hades' house'), Hom. also Ἀΐδης, -αο 'Hades'. The etymological background of this difficult word is disputed (cf. Frisk I: 33–34; *LfgrE A*: 273–278). Among the most prominent suggestions is a privative compound **n̥-u̯id-* 'unseen', the solution preferred by Beekes (2010: 34), and **sm̥-u̯id-* 'meeting (with the ancestors)' (Thieme 1952). Chantraine (2009: 30) laconically sums up the situation: "several uncertain hypotheses that there is no reason to repeat" ("nombreuses hypothèses incertaines qu'il n'y a pas lieu de répéter").

However, even before this, Wackernagel (1885: 277; 1897: 7)[7] anticipated the alternative scenario favoured by Janda: "*Αϊδ- is most naturally traced back to *Αϝιδ-, and this, if not to **yaivid-*, then to **saivid-*. Thus, we are immediately reminded of lat. *saevus*, the idea of which comes close enough to the nature of the god of the underworld".[8] While Wackernagel spells out neither the precise semantic development nor the morphological details, Janda (2000: 127) points out the suggestive Latin expression *saeva vincula* 'cruel chains' and, as for the derivational pattern leading to **sai̯u̯id-*, he suggests a Proto-Greek "*hai̯u̯o-* "bindend, (gebunden)" → **hai̯u̯id-* "die Bindende, Bindung, Fessel" > **Ἄϊς" (p. 131).

With this interpretation, Hades' house would be 'the house of the binder', and, as usual, the Gk. -ιδ-stem would at least functionally correspond to the Old Indic *vr̥kíḥ*-stems, i.e. substantives of appurtenance or singulatives.[9] The only slight problem here is the unexpected barytonesis, which Janda explains as a result of the onomastic use of the word, as e.g. in adj. γλαυκός → PN Γλαῦκος, probably triggered by the accent retraction of the vocative (cf. Schwyzer 1959: 380).

The additional **-u̯-* seen in **sh₂ai̯u̯o-* and in Ved. *sévate* may also be suspected in an old **-u̯el/u̯en-* heteroclitic. As argued in Olsen (2010: 78), the most economical way to combine Hitt. *išḫial-* (n) 'bond, band, belt' with *išḫiul-* (n) 'binding, obligation, treaty' seems to be starting from a heteroclitic **sh₂iu̯ōl-* > Hitt. *išḫial-* with loss of **-u̯-* as in *idālu-* 'bad, evil' < **h₁ed-u̯ōl-* (cf. Melchert 1984: 30; Rasmussen 1992b:

[7] Cf. also Wackernagel 1885: 277 on the development of **ai̯u̯i*.

[8] "*Αιδ- liegt es am nächsten auf *Αϝιδ- und dieses, wenn nicht auf **yaivid-*, so auf **saivid-* zurückzuführen. Damit werden wir sofort an lat. *saevus* erinnert, dessen Begriff dem Wesen des Unterweltgottes nahe genug liegt."

[9] Cf. Meier 1975: 81–87 for a survey of explanations offered for the origin of the Greek suffix -(ι)δ-. Meier's conclusion is that the dental in Greek is "(n)icht erklärbar", and that the attempt to consider it a laryngeal reflex (thus Rosén 1956–1957; Olsen 2000) is unsatisfactory.

364; Rieken 1999: 446–448), the derivational basis of *sh_2iulo- > Hitt. *išḫiul-*, where the connection between *-*u̯ōl*(-) and a derivative in *-*ulV*- is paralleled by cases such as *$u̯eid$-*u̯ōl*- > Gk. εἴδωλον 'phantom, image' beside *$u̯(e)id$-*ul*- in Gk. εἰδυλίς 'acquainted with, knowing', Lith. *pavìdulis* '(very) image', Ved. *vidurá*- 'wise, knowing'. According to Rieken (2008: 253), elaborating on Melchert's discovery of syncope of *-*o*- in the sequences *-*Cros/m*, *-*Clos/m*,[10] "none of the inflectional or derivational morphemes ending in *-ēl*, *-īl*, and *-ūl* in Hittite go back to athematic endings or suffixes, but all originate instead from the loss of the final syllable of thematic *-*lo*-stems". The wide-reaching consequence of this is the elimination of most alleged primary *l*-stems or *l/n*-stems that would otherwise only be attested in Anatolian. On the other hand, tracing Hitt. *išḫial*- back to a *lo*-stem where the final syllable is continued as *-*l̥* > *-al*,[11] is morphologically less obvious, while the analysis proposed here has the advantage of uniting the two derivatives under one common heading. Apart from the assumed loss of *-*u̯*- in the sequence *-*u̯ōl*- – as in *idālu*- – the suggested analysis is thus identical with that of Rieken (1999: 446) "*sh_2i-*ól*".[12]

The preceding conclusion, in turn, is potentially relevant to the evaluation of the Germanic word for 'soul', *saiwalō*- > Goth. *saiwala* (f), OE *sāwol* (m), OS *seola* (f), OHG *sēula*, *sēla* (f) 'id.', whose etymology is most often considered unknown.[13]

However, according to Janda (2000: 134–135), we may be dealing with a proto-form *$sh_2ai̯u̯o$-lah_2-, yet another derivative of the same stem as Lat. *saevus*.[14] Since the 'soul' was primarily perceived as the soul of the dead, we would have an expression with the same semantic connection between 'binding' and 'death' as assumed for Hades. The basic idea may seem quite plausible but, considering the existence of a *-*u̯el/u̯en*- heteroclitic for this root, Janda's idea of a diminutive "die kleine gefesselte (Leiche o. ä.)", may not be the most natural analysis.[15]

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[10] Cf. Melchert 2001a and 1994: 87, and see also Melchert 2001b on Hittite stems in *-il*.

[11] Melchert 2001b: 161. Cf. also Oettinger 1986: 16–17.

[12] Cf. also Kloekhorst 2008: 391–393. Further discussion of the relation between **r* and **l* in heteroclitics and their secondary derivatives in Olsen 2010: 77.

[13] Cf. e.g. Lehmann 1986: 292; Casaretto 2004: 401; Kroonen 2013: 423.

[14] Thus already Grienberger 1900: 179, though with a different semantic motivation.

[15] Casaretto (2004) objects that an adjective as a basis of a diminutive may be unlikely, so that this would be a formation with a connecting vowel. In that case, the derivational basis is enigmatic.

A simpler and semantically more straightforward interpretation would be a simple *ah*$_2$-stem derivative of the heteroclitic, **sh*$_2$*aḭ-u̯ol-ah*$_2$- 'the one associated with a bond'.

3. The root **deh*$_1$-

Verbal forms of **deh*$_1$- 'bind' (*LIV*^{2}: 102) include a *i̯*-present, probably **dh*$_1$*-i̯é-*, in Anatolian, Hitt. *tiya* ipv. 'bind'!, Greek δέω, and in Indo-Iranian, Ved. *dyati* 'binds', OAv. ipv. middle, *ni.diiātąm*. A potentially old reduplicated present is found in Gk. δίδημι.

While the root apparently simply means 'bind' without the magic connotations of **sh*$_2$*aḭ-*, the verb is still used in connection with burial practices, as in the famous Hittite "Song of Nesa", where the dead soldier cries out:

Nešaš TÚG.I.A *Nešaš* TÚG.I.A *tiya=mu tiya*
nu=mu
annaš=maš katta arnut tiya=mu tiya
nu=mu uwaš=maš katta arnut tiya=mu tiya

Clothes of Nesa, clothes of Nesa, bind me, bind!
Bring me down [for burial] with my mother – bind me, bind!
Bring me down [for burial] with my nurse [?] – bind me, bind![16]

The Hittite match of the sumerogram TÚG.I.A 'clothing' is *u̯ašpa-* (cf. also HLuw. *u̯ašpant-* 'wearing shrouds' (?); Melchert 2001a: 265), and as ingeniously demonstrated by Watkins (1969), this corresponds to the basic stem of Lat. *vespillō* 'undertaker (for the poorest classes)', later 'grave robber, a thief who steals the clothes from a corpse'. The present author (2016) has argued that the common root segment is probably **u̯obʰ-s-* from **u̯ebʰ-* 'weave' rather than the generally assumed **(h)u̯es-p-* from **(h)u̯es-* 'dress', and thus connected with the word for 'wasp', **u̯obʰsah*$_2$- > **u̯opsah*$_2$- > OE *wæfs*, MP *waβz*, OPr. *wobse* (metathesized **u̯osbʰah*$_2$- > **u̯ospah*$_2$- > Lat. *vespa*, OE *wæsp*). This suggests that the wasp, from the way its nest is constructed, was perceived as a 'wrapper', **u̯obʰsó-*, and that a corpse back in PIE times could be wrapped in a shroud, **u̯óbʰso-*, consisting of several thin layers of woven material.

[16] Cf. Melchert 1998: 492 for text and translation. 'Bind' is the only interpretation of *tiya* that fits the context; cf. also Kloekhorst 2008: 880–881.

Figure 1. A wasp's nest. Photo: Russel Wills, Wikimedia Commons © License: CC BY-SA 2.0.

Pre-dialectal nominal derivatives of **deh₁-* include the *men*-stem **déh₁-mn̥-* in Gk. -δημα and Ved. *dā́man-* 'band, rope' and the zero-grade *ti*-stem **dh₁-ti-* in Gk. δέσις 'binding' = Ved. *-diti-*.

Characteristically, *dā́man-* is compared to Varuṇa's invisible fetters, c.f. RV.2.28.6 (Varuṇa):

> ***dā́meva*** *vatsā́d vi mumugdhy áṁho nahí tvád āré nimiṣáś canéṣe*
>
> **Like a rope** from a calf, untie confining straits [from me], for I cannot be away from you even for the blink of an eye.

RV.7.86.5 (Varuṇa)

> *áva drugdhā́ni pítrya sṛjā nó 'va yā́ vayám cakṛmā́ tanū́bhiḥ*
> *áva rājan paśutŕ̥paṃ ná tāyúṃ sṛjā́ vatsáṃ* ***ná dā́mno*** *vásiṣṭham*
>
> Release from us ancestral deceits and those that we ouselves have committed. O king, release Vasistha **from his bond** like a cattle-stealing thief, like a calf.

Varuṇa, with Mitra and Aryaman, is the foremost *ādityá-*, a vṛddhi derivative 'son of *Áditi-*' < **n̥-dh₁ti-* 'unboundedness', or "the goddess

who personifies freedom from offense and its consequences" (Brereton 1981: 197). He is constantly prayed to for forgiveness from guilt, as if being untied from a rope, and thus his function in a Vedic context is rather that of *un*binding than of binding.

4. The root **u̯elhu-*, zero grade **u̯lhu-* > **u̯luh-*

There is no general agreement on the reconstruction of our third root. *LIV*²: 674, 675 tentatively operates with a root **u̯el-* 'einschliessen, verhüllen' and a **u̯el-* 'drehen, rollen', leaving it an open question whether the two were originally identical.

The problem is complicated by a potential partial semantic and phonological merger of **u̯el-* and **u̯elhu̯-* owing to the morphophonemic alternations of "eRu/Rū"-roots where both the laryngeal and the root-final **-u̯-* would regularly be lost in some contexts, notably word-finally (cf. Rasmussen 1989: 103–104). At least the concepts of 'covering' and 'wrapping, rolling' are semantically compatible, so it seems reasonable to reconstruct a basic root **u̯elhu̯-* with the double meaning.

An old derivative is the *men*-stem **u̯elhu-mn̥-* → **u̯eluh-mn̥-* 'roll, covering', continued in Lat. *volūmen*, Gk. εἴλῡμα and Arm. *gelowmn*. Here the regular full grade **u̯elhu-* has been contaminated with the zero grade **u̯lhu-* > **u̯luh-* with regular metathesis to the hybrid **u̯eluh-mn̥-*, at least in Italic and Greek.[17] As a secondary thematic derivative one would regularly get **u̯elhu-mn-ó-* 'associated with covering' that, with regular simplification of the cluster **-mn-* > *-n-* would yield **u̯elhu-n-o-*,[18] so that the theonym *Váruṇa-*, again with 'vocatival' accentuation, could in principle be interpreted as 'the one associated with covering', depending on an analysis of *Váruṇa*'s functional area. Another option might be a derivation from the weak stem of a heteroclitic **u̯elhu̯r/un-* as suggested by Janda (2000: 111), allegedly continued in εἶλαρ with

[17] Strictly speaking, it is impossible to know the quantity of the *-u-* (*ow*) in Armenian, but it is unlikely that this early development took place independently in Italic and Greek, while Armenian, a 'Balkanic' language like Greek, would be left out.

[18] The regular distribution is **-mn-* > **-m-* after neutral roots, **-n-* after roots containing a labial, as is archaic forms of the inst.sg. of *man*-stems in Vedic (cf. MacDonell 1910: 208 and, earlier, Schmidt 1895: 121–122), e.g. *drāghmā́* from *draghimán-* 'length' vs. *prathinā́* from *prathimán-* 'breadth'. Though **-mo-* is productive at the expense of **-no-*, the same distribution is observed in nominal derivation, cf. e.g. **le/ou̯ksmn̥* > Lat. *lūmen* vs. **le/ou̯ksnah₂-* > Lat. *lūna* etc. (cf. Rasmussen 1989: 199–203 for material).

the approximate meaning 'parapet, protective wall'. However, this is preferably derived from εἰλέω 'press together, draw together, fence in' rather than the homonymous 'roll, turn, wind'.

There is no general agreement on the etymological background of *Váruṇa-* and suggestions abound, not least because an Indo-Iranian root segment **var(i)-* with PIE **-l-* or **-r-* and with or without a root-final and/or initial laryngeal has so many potential sources. As neatly summed up by Mayrhofer (*KEWA* III: 151), "Even if no appellative meaning may be demonstrated, the number of root-etymologies that may all claim a certain probablility remains too large."[19] (cf. also *EWAia* II: 515–516).

A certain priority has been given to a connection with *vratá-* 'commandment'; compare *EWAia* loc. cit: "Einiges spricht für eine auch sprachgeschichtliche Verbindung mit *vratá-*" and Jamison & Brereton (*The Rigveda* I: 43): "The most prominent of the Ādityas is Varuṇa, whose name is related to *vratá* "commandment" and who therefore is the god of commandments".[20]

However, it is difficult to account for the morphological pattern if *vratá-* and *Váruṇa-* are derived from the same root. Presumably, *vratá-* is from **u̯erh₁-* 'speak',[21] while *Váruṇa-*, in consideration of the rarity of the suffix *-una-*,[22] is better understood if *-u-* is part of the basic root, which means that **u̯elhu̯-* would be the obvious candidate. In that case, as suggested above, a proto-form **u̯elhu-no-* would be morphologically coherent.

The same root is the basis of ON *vǫlr* 'round stick'[23] < **ualu-* < **u̯olhu-*, from which **u̯alu̯ōn-* > *vǫlva*, probably from a Hoffmann-compound **u̯olhu̯(o)-h₃onh₂-*, lit. 'the one in charge of the stick, a stick-carrier', using her stick during *seiðr*.

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[19] "Läßt sich keine appellativische Bedeutung nachweisen, dann bleibt die Zahl von Wurzel-Etymologien für den Gottesnamen allzu groß, deren jede eine gewisse Wahrscheinlichkeit beanspruchen kann."

[20] Cf. the detailed analysis of Varuṇa's function as the god of commandments, *vratá-*, by Brereton (1981: 63–92), who, unfortunately, fails to explain the formal details.

[21] Cf. Rasmussen 1992a: 24–25 for a discussion of the complicated relation between Ved. *vratá-* (n) 'religious rule, command; religious vow, oath', OAv. *uruuatəm* (Y.31.3) with variant *uruuātəm*, but also *uruuāϑā* 'friend' and OCS *rota* 'oath, vow'. The aspirate in *uruuāϑā* probably reflects the cluster **-h₁t-* > **-th₁-* > *-ϑ-* with trace of the root-final laryngeal.

[22] Cf. Wackernagel & Debrunner 1954: 484–486.

[23] Also Goth. *walus** (m) 'stick', OFr. *walu-bera* 'pilgrim' (cf. Casaretto 2004: 199–200). The corresponding adjective is ON *valr* 'round', as if < **u̯olho-*.

Figure 2. The staff of the *völva*. Photo: Arnold Mikkelsen, Nationalmuseet Danmark © License: CC BY-SA.

Finally, the old designation of the pastures of the dead, Hitt. *wellu-* (c/n) 'meadow, pasture' (Weitenberg 1984: 181–182), ON *vǫllr* 'meadow, pasture' and Gk. Ἠλύσιον (πεδίον) 'The Elysian Fields', appears to be connected with this root. This point will be elaborated in Olsen forthcoming.

5. Varuṇa and Yama

In the Old Indic pantheon, two gods in particular are associated with binding and unbinding, Varuṇa and Yama, and both of them carry a noose, *pā́śa-*, as an attribute. But, while Yama has the sinister role of getting hold of his victims and binding them to death, Varuṇa is mostly invoked to *release* poor mortals from their spiritual fetters, caused by moral transgressions.

Thus, RV 1.24.13:

> *śúnaḥśépo hy áhvad gṛbhītás* ***tríṣv*** *ādityáṁ drupadéṣu* ***baddháḥ***
> *ávainam rā́jā Váruṇaḥ sasṛjyād vidvā́ṁ ádabdho* ***ví mumoktu pā́śān***
>
> Since Śunahśepa, seized and bound in three stocks, called upon the Aditya, King Varuna should set him loose. Let him – the knowing one, never cheated – **release the fetters**.

or RV.7.88.7:

> *vy àsmát* ***pā́śaṃ*** *váruṇo mumocat*
>
> Varuna will release **his fetter** from us,

following the poet Vasiṣṭha's regret of his transgressions and his hope for not having to pay for them.

Cf. also RV 2.28.5–2.28.6:

> *ví mác chrathāya raśanā́m ivága ṛdhyā́ma te varuṇa khā́m ṛtásya*
> *mā́ tántuś chedi váyato dhíyam me mā́ mā́trā śāry apásaḥ purá ṛtóḥ*
> *ápo sú myakṣa varuṇa bhiyásam mát sámrāḷ ṛtāvó 'nu mā gṛbhāya*
> *dā́meva vatsā́d ví mumugdhy áṁho […]*
>
> Loosen my offense from me like a halter. We would succeed in reaching the wellspring of your truth, Varuṇa.
> Let my thread not be cut as I weave my insight. Let not the full measure of my work be broken before its season.
> Unfasten fear from me, o Varuṇa! Hold me close, o truth-possessing universal king!
> Like a rope from a calf, untie confining straits […]

Figure 3. Varuṇa with noose. Rajarani temple, 11th c. Photo: Bernard Gagnon. Wikimedia Commons © License: CC BY-SA 3.0.

As noted by Janda (2000: 126), the same idea of mental binding has a parallel in Avestan, Y.29.1b, about the soul of the cow:

*ā mā aēšmō hazascā rəmō **āhišāiiā** dərəšca təuuišca*

[For] the cruelty of fury and violence, of bondage and might, hold me in captivity.[24]

In some cases, Varuṇa's fetters are described as being three in number: the uppermost, the midmost and the lowest. Compare, besides the above-mentioned *tríṣu* 'threefold' in RV 1.24.13, also RV 1.24.15:

úd uttamám varuṇa pā́śam asmád ávādhamaṃ ví madhyamáṃ śrathāya
átha vayám aditya vraté távā́nagaso áditaye syāma

Loosen above the **uppermost fetter** from us, o Varuna, **below the lowest**, away the **midmost**. Then under your commandment, o Aditya, we would be without offence for Aditi

RV.1.25.21 (Varuṇa):

*úd **uttamám** mumugdhi no ví **pā́śam madhyamáṃ** cṛta **ávādhamā́ni** jīváse*

Release above the **uppermost fetter** from us, unbind away **the midmost**, [loosen] below **those lowest**, in order for us to live

As Varuṇa's primary domain is the maintenance of *ṛta*, the divine order, he is constantly invoked to release mortals from mortal sin. However, while he cannot be described as an actual god of death, he does have the power to draw the consequences of man's transgressions, and if he is not appeased death must necessarily follow; compare RV 1.24.11:

áheḷamāno varuṇehá bodhy úruśaṅsa mā́ na áyuḥ prá moṣīḥ

Become no longer angry now, Varuṇa! O you of wide fame, **do not steal away our lifetime!**

– and, equally ominously, RV.7.89.1:

*mó ṣu varuṇa **mṛnmáyaṃ gṛháṃ** rājann aháṁ gamam*
mṛḷā́ sukṣatra mṛḷáya

O King Varuna, let me not go to the **house of clay**!
Be merciful, o you whose dominion is great. Have mercy.

[24] Translation by Insler 1975.

Figure 4. Varuṇa with noose and daṇḍa. Rajarani temple, 11th c. Photo: Benjamín Preciado Solis, Centro de Estudios de Asia y Africa, El Colegio de Mexico. Wikimedia Commons © License: CC BY-SA 3.0.

Figure 5. Yama, painting, ca. 1820–25. Victoria and Albert Museum, London © License: CC BY-NC.

Here the 'house of clay', according to Lincoln's convincing analysis (1982), refers to the burial mound.

In one enigmatic passage, termed by Geldner a "Rätselvers", Varuṇa is even compared with a cloak, 'enveloping all the created thing'. RV.8.41.7:

yá āsv ***átka*** *āśáye víśvā jātány eṣām*
pári dhā́māni mármṛśad ***váruṇasya puró*** *gáye víśve devā́ ánu vratáṃ*
nábhantām anyaké same

Who lies on these [fem. = the waters?] [like] a **cloak**, while enveloping all the created thing of these [masc. = the gods?] and their domains – **in Varuna's household**, in front [of him], are all the gods, following his commandment.

Such connections with fettering and covering are also characteristic of Yama, the death god, who mainly appears in the later parts of the *Rig Veda*, especially books 1 and 10. Like Varuṇa, he is traditionally depicted with a noose, but he also carries a stave, daṇḍa.

In one of the funeral hymns, RV 10.14.2, the deceased is told that Yama was the first to find the way to the pasture-land (*gávyūti-*) of the forefathers, and now it is his turn:

yamó no gātúm prathamó viveda naiṣá gávyūti ápabhartavā́ u
yátrā naḥ pū́rve pitáraḥ pareyúr enā́ jajñānáḥ pathyā́ ánu svā́ḥ

Yama first found the way for us: this pasture-land is not to be taken away. [The way] on which our ancient forefathers departed, along that [do] those who have since been born [follow] along their own paths.

On his travel to the other side, he is going to meet both Yama and Varuṇa (RV 10.14.7):

préhi préhi pathíbhiḥ pūrvyébhir yátrā naḥ pū́rve pitáraḥ pareyúḥ
ubhā́ rā́jana svadháyā mádantā yamám paśyāsi váruṇaṃ ca devám

Go forth, go forth along the ancient paths on which our ancient forefathers departed.
You will see both kings become exhilarated on the svadhā[-cry], Yama and Varuṇa the god.

A remarkable feature of Yama is his association with weaving and covering, presumably covering up the dead body. Thus RV 7.33.9:

yaména tatám paridhíṃ váyanto

weaving the covering [garment] stretched by Yama

and RV.7.33.12:

yaména tatám paridhíṃ vayiṣyánn

intending to weave the covering stretched by Yama

6. The *völva*

In Old Norse tradition, the *völva*, as a specialist of witchcraft, connects the realms of the living and the dead.

In the poem *Baldr's dreams*, probably from the 10th century (transl. Henry Adam Bellows), Baldr is having disturbing nightmares and in order to find out what is going to happen, Odin, himself the "father of magic" and a specialist of *seidr*, seeks help from a dead *völva* in her grave (vv. 3–4):

Sá var blóðugr	Bloody he was
um brjóst framan	on his breast before,
ok galdrs föður	At the father of magic
gól of lengi;	he howled from afar;
fram reið Óðinn,	Forward rode Othin,
foldvegr dunði;	the earth resounded
hann kom at hávu	Till the house so high
Heljar ranni.	of Hel he reached.
Þá reið Óðinn	Then Othin rode
fyrir austan dyrr,	to the eastern door,
þar er hann vissi	There, he knows well,
***völu** leiði;*	was the wise-woman's grave
nam hann vittugri	Magic he spoke
valgaldr kveða,	and mighty charms,
unz nauðig reis,	Till spell-bound she rose,
nás orð of kvað:	And in death she spoke

Knowing that she can see into the future, Odin asks her (v. 8):

*"Þegj-at-tu, **völva**,*	"Wise-woman, cease not!
þik vil ek fregna,	I seek from thee
unz alkunna,	All to know
vil ek enn vita:	that I fain would ask:
Hverr mun Baldr	Who shall be bane
at bana verða	of Baldr become,
ok Óðins son	And steal the life
aldri ræna?"	from Othin's son?"

Another relevant text is the Eddic poem *Grógaldr*, where Svipdag raises his mother Groa, a *völva*, from the dead (v. 6):

"Vaki þú, Gróa,	"Wake thee, Groa!
vaki þú, góð kona,	wake, mother good!
*vek ek þik **dauðra dura;***	At the doors of the dead I call thee;

ef þú þat mant,	Thy son, bethink thee,
at þú þinn mög bæðir	thou badst to seek
til ***kumbldysjar*** *koma."*	Thy help at the hill of death."

Gróa is willing to help her son by magic, and among the long series of the favours she grants him is the following about the loosening of fetters (v. 10):

"Þann gel ek þér inn fimta,	"Then fifth I will chant thee,
ef þér ***fjöturr*** *verðr*	if fetters perchance
borinn at boglimum:	Shall bind thy bending limbs:
leysigaldr *læt ek*	O'er thy thighs do I chant
þér fyr legg of kveðinn,	a loosening-charm,
ok stökkr þá láss af limum,	and the lock is burst from the limbs,
en af fótum ***fjöturr****."*	And the fetters fall from the feet."

7. The terminology of binding and wrapping

Summing up this preliminary linguistic survey, the Indo-European proto-language possessed at least two roots with the meaning 'bind', **deh₁*- and **sh₂aḭ*-.[25] Of these, **deh₁*- appears to be the neutral term, although it does occur in contexts relating to the binding of the dead and in a metaphorical sense in Ved. *Áditi*- 'unboundedness' and the corresponding vṛddhi derivative *āditya*-, of which Varuṇa-, the god of divine right and unbinding from transgressions, is the most prominent.

**sh₂aḭ*- and the extended version **sh₂aḭd*-, on the other hand, has a connotation of magic, which is undoubtedly original, with traces in Anatolian, Italic, Celtic, Germanic, Greek, Baltic and Indo-Iranian. More specifically, the *-*to*-derivative **sh₂aḭto*- or **sh₂oḭto*- in the meaning 'magic' is clearly pre-dialectal.

The etymological connection between Hitt. *wašpa*- 'clothing' and Lat. *vespillō* 'undertaker' indicates that the tradition of shrouding the dead goes back to Proto-Indo-European. The striking correspondence between the proto-form **u̯óbʰs-o*- and the assumed agent noun **u̯obʰsó*- in the word for 'wasp' further suggests that the shroud may have looked somewhat like a mummy wrap or a wasp's nest.

The actual act of wrapping or shrouding may have been expressed by a derivative of the root **u̯elhu̯*- with the double meaning of 'rolling, wrapping' and 'concealing'. This is consistent with the suggested

[25] **bʰendʰ*- (or perhaps **bʰendh₁*-; cf. *LIV*²: 75) may be restricted to Core Indo-European.

analysis of the theonym *Váruṇa-* as **u̯elhu-no-* < **u̯elhu-mno-* 'the one connected with wrapping or concealing', a secondary derivative of the well-attested **u̯elhu-mn̥-* → **u̯lhu-mn̥-* > **u̯luh-mn̥-*. On the one hand, Varuna is clearly connected with 'binding' and 'unbinding', and in a single passage even 'enveloping'. On the other, he is the one invoked not to let the singer go to the 'house of clay', that is, the mound, which encloses and conceals the deceased.

8. Mythological aspects

Several mythological traditions of the Indo-European world share the idea that fate and death are associated with magical binding. This would account for the Greek name of Hades, and in ancient India the gods representing the same line of thought are Yama and Varuṇa, both characterized by their noose, *pā́śa-*. While Varuṇa mostly specializes in spiritual 'binding' as a consequence of transgressions against divine right, Yama is more explicitly the god of death, the psychopomp that leads the deceased to their final destination. He is the one that weaves the shroud, and in this capacity he may be compared with the *völvas* or *norns* in Norse mythology, where the *völva*'s staff, the *vǫlr*, is seen as a distaff. What Yama's *daṇḍa* originally represents apart from an instrument of punishment is difficult to determine, but at least its top part in traditional iconography is reminiscent of thread on a distaff.[26]

The three Nordic norns, like the Greek μοῖραι and the Roman *Parcae* have the role of spinning, measuring and finally cutting off the life thread of all human beings.[27]

A particularly gory variant of this idea is found in the skaldic *Darraðarljóð*, dated to the beginning of the tenth century, which has been inserted in Chapter 157 of the Njáls saga, where twelve Valkyries are weaving the fate of warriors:[28]

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[26] The Greek psychopomp, Hermes, also carries a staff, the κηρύκειον, but its adornment with two intertwined snakes seems to have been taken over from the Sumerian-Babylonian deity Ningishzida ($^{\text{D}}$Nin-giš-zi-da), who is also a god of the underworld.

[27] At least this motif seems to go back to Core Indo-European; cf. the extensive treatment by Giannakis (1999). As for the Roman tradition, Lipp (2016) has demonstrated that the form *Neuna*, attested on two of three cippae near Lavinium from the early 3rd century, *Parca.Maurtia/dono* 'Parcae Martiae donum', *Neuna. dono* 'Nonae donum' and *Neuna.Fatae* 'Nonae Fatae' must be derived from a stem **snē-uen-* 'spinning', the *n*-stem alternant of the heteroclitic **sneh$_1$-u̯r̥-*.

[28] Translation by George Webbe Dasent (1861), *Icelandic Saga Database*.

1. *Vítt'er orpið*	See! warp is stretched
fyrir valfalli	For warriors'fall,
rifs reiðiský.	Lo! weft in loom
rignir blóði;	'Tis wet with blood;
nú er fyrir geirum	Now fight foreboding,
grár upp kominn	'Neath friends' swift fingers,
vefr, verþjóðar	Our gray woof waxeth
ær þær vinur fylla	With war's alarms,
rauðum vefti	Our warp bloodred,
Randvés bana.	Our weft corseblue.
2. *Sjá er orpinn vefr*	This woof is y-woven
ýta þörmum	With entrails of men,
og harðkléaðr	This warp is hardweighted
höfðum manna;	With heads of the slain,
eru dreyrrekin	Spears blood-besprinkled
dörr að sköftum	For spindles we use,
járnvarðr yllir,	Our loom ironbound,
en örum hrælaðr.	And arrows our reels;
skulum slá sverðum	With swords for our shuttles
sigrvef þenna	this war-woof we work,
3. *Gengr Hildr vefa*	Now War-winner walketh
ok hjörþrimul,	To weave in her turn.
Sanngríðr, Svipul	Now Swordswinger steppeth,
sverðum tognum.	Now Swiftstroke, now Storm;
Skaft mun gnesta	When they speed the shuttle
skjöldr mun bresta,	How spear-heads shall flash!
mun hjálmgagarr	Shields crash, and helmgnawer
í hlíf koma.	On harness bite hard!

9. Archaeological perspectives

It would now be established that linguistic evidence pointing to a strong association of binding and weaving with death is widespread among early Indo-European traditions, but it remains to be seen in how far these ideas may be corroborated by material findings. The following brief sketch is quite tentative, and hopefully it will be possible for archaeologists with an interest in these matters to provide a supplement, whether confirming or rejecting the suggestions offered by actual archaeological evidence.

Burial mounds are a significant feature of Indo-European culture, known from the Yamnaya in the steppes to the Scandinavian Bronze Age and the Sintashta culture of the Indo-Iranians. Even in the *Rig Veda*, we have a beautiful description of the earth gently covering the dead (RV 10.18.10):

> *Úc chvañcasva pṛthivi mā́ ní bādhatāḥ sūpayān ā́smai bhava sūpavañcanā́ mātā́ putráṃ yáthā sicā́bhy ènam bhūma ūrṇuhi*
>
> Arch up, Earth; do not press down. Become easy to approach for him, easy to curl up in.
> Like a mother her son with her hem, cover him, Earth.[29]

But before the deceased is led to the grave and covered by the mound where rich meadows for grazing of his herds will recreate the ideal world of the living, as already suggested by the Hittite phrase about the dead king that he will 'go to his meadow',[30] he has to go through elements of binding and shrouding.

As we have already seen, the use of a shroud would be established on linguistic grounds by the Hittite–Latin correspondence between *ua̯špa-* and *vespillō*. It is, however, also remarkable that early skeletons from the steppe (Dnjepr-Donetsk or Mariupol culture, about 4500 BCE, predecessors of the Yamnaya horizon), are usually "heavily contracted at the sides" (cf. Telegin & Potekhina 1987). As noted by David Anthony (pers. comm.), "[t]his may be indicative of the fact that prior to burial the dead were tightly bound or swaddled".

Still, it is an open question whether the dead were only swaddled or also fettered. According to the *Rig Veda*, Varuṇa enigmatically makes use of three fetters, the uppermost, *uttamá-*, the middle, *madhyamá-*, and the lowest, *adhamá-*, or his fettering is simply described as threefold, *tríṣu*. As a universal king, Varuṇa must certainly be assumed to have authority over the entire universe, and so Renou (1960: 355) interprets these occurrences as references to the triple division of space. However, if this is the correct analysis, it seems peculiar that the listing of the three adjectives, *uttamá-*, *madhyamá-*, *adhamá-*, does not correspond to explicitly cosmic references, where we find *avamá-* rather than *adhamá-* and *paramá-* beside *uttamá-*, which means that we cannot be dealing with a set phrase; compare:

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[29] Cf. Kuz'mina (2007: 185–204) on the mortuary practices of the Indo-Iranians.
[30] Cf. Puhvel 1969 and Olsen forthcoming on the formal details.

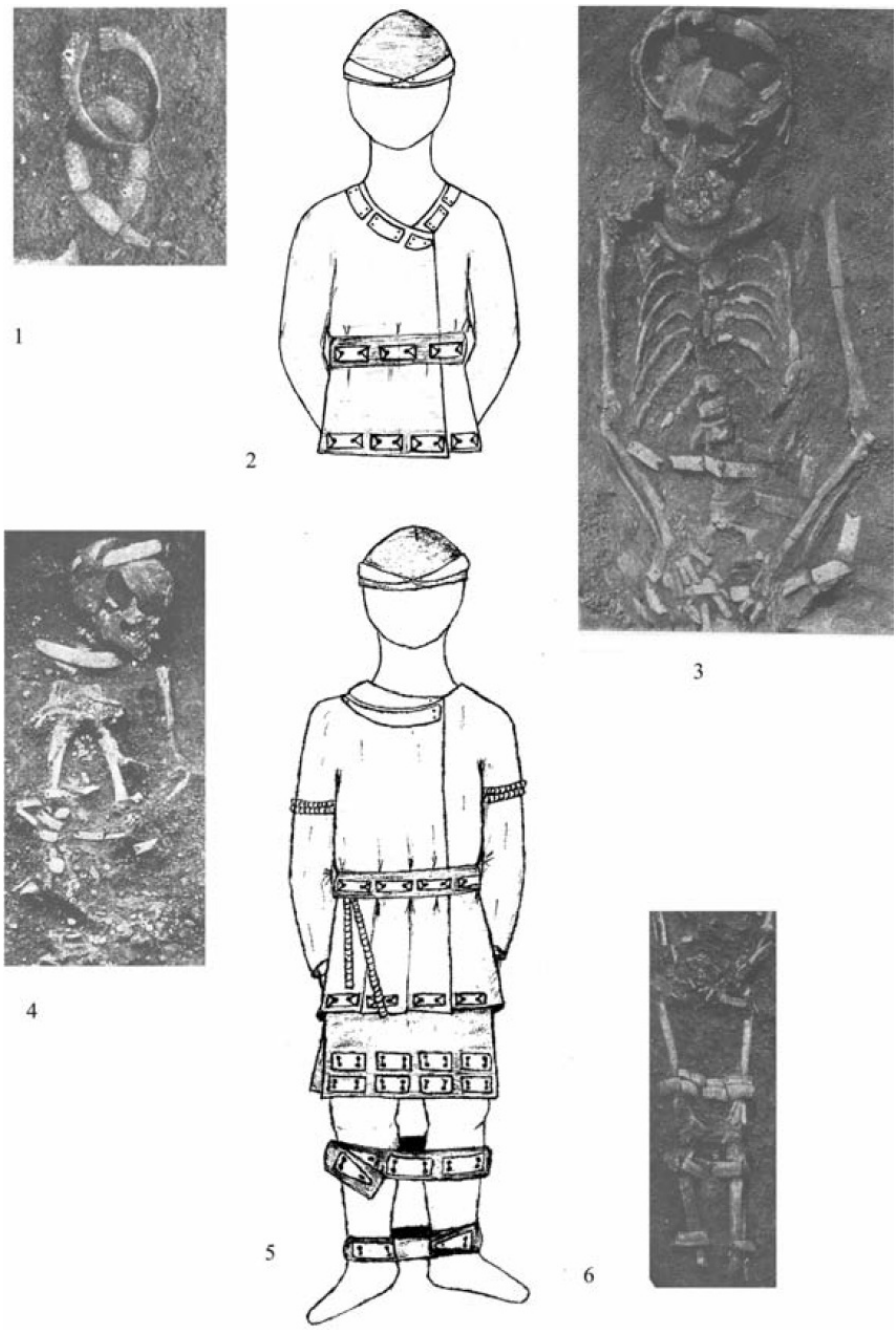

Figure 6. Burials with reconstructions of the clothing from the Mariupol cemetary. From Kotova 2010 © License: CC BY-SA 4.0.

RV 1.108.9–1.108.10 (Indra & Agni):

> *yád indrāgnī* ***avamásyām*** *pṛthivyā́m* ***madhyamásyām paramásyām*** *utá stháḥ […]*
> *yád indrāgnī* ***paramásyā́m*** *pṛthivyā́m* ***madhyamásyām avamásyām*** *utá stháḥ*
>
> When, o Indra and Agni, you are on the lowest earth, on the middle one, and on the highest one […]
> When, o Indra and Agni, you are on the highest earth, on the middle one, and on the lowest one […]

RV 5.60.6 (Maruts):

> *yád* ***uttamé*** *maruto* ***madhyamé*** *vā yád* ***vāvamé*** *subhagāso diví sthá*
>
> If you are in the highest heaven, o Maruts, or in the middle one, or if you are in the lowest one, you of good fortune.

On this background, one may perhaps quite tentatively venture the idea that the three fetters in question could refer to the preparation of the dead body. In her investigation of burial clothing from the same cultural horizon as the contracted skeletons, it appears that fetters on ankles, shins and waist also occur. Might this ancient practice be mirrored in Varuṇa's lower, middle and upmost fetters?

Of course, a suggestion of this kind must be taken with all possible caution. Nevertheless, the language of religious conventions has been known to be long-lived, and if the apparent similarity is not simply accidental we must assume a continuous tradition spanning thousands of years.

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9. Indo-European cremations and cosmic fires
A comparative analysis of the funeral and fire rites of Bronze Age Håga, Sweden

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Abstract

The Håga grave mound outside Uppsala, Sweden, is unique in Scandinavian Bronze Age. About a third of all bronzes and bronze fragments in Sweden's Bronze Age were found in this grave, dated to around 1000 BCE. While the riches are spectacular, the funeral and not least the fire rituals are equally unique. The cremated king or chieftain was buried in an oak-log coffin and this is the northernmost oak-logged coffin burial in Scandinavia and also the oldest with cremation as a funeral practice. The role of fire in the funeral and rituals has been a neglected area of study and in Håga there are massive layers of charcoal measuring up to nearly 1 metre in depth. This most likely reflects complex fire rituals in the centuries before the cremation of the main deceased. The role of massive fire rituals is analysed in a comparative Indo-European perspective with an emphasis on seasonal and agricultural rituals. By combining ethnographic sources in Europe with insights from the Vedic traditions, some of Håga's enigmas are discussed highlighting fire in culture and cosmology.

1. Introduction

In Scandinavian prehistory, cremation was one of the dominant funeral practices, together with inhumation; although water and air burials were probably also common, they leave fewer traces in the archaeological material. Today, the image of cremation is often associated with Hindu cremations on open pyres along the holy rivers on the Indian subcontinent, but in prehistory there were a great variation in the ways of conducting cremations as a specific mortuary ritual. While cremation as a funeral practice

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becomes more popular in the Early Bronze Age (*c.* 1750–1100 BCE) and dominates in many periods and places from the Late Bronze Age (*c.* 1100–500 BCE) onwards, cremations have in fact been conducted for 10,000 years in Scandinavia, and one of the earliest cremations has been found from the Maglemose culture in Hammelev in Southern Jutland, dated to *c.* 8250 cal. BCE (Eriksen & Andersen 2016). Still, cremation as a funeral practice in Scandinavia is intimately connected to later Indo-European traditions from the Bronze Age onwards and closely associated with metallurgy, the mastering of extreme heat and intensive use of fire in rituals, including agricultural and seasonal rites.

From the early days of comparative Indo-European mythology and religion (e.g. Müller 1856, 1859, 1879), it was obviously clear that there were structural and cultural connections between the ancient Vedic and later Hindu traditions in the east and the European and Scandinavian practices and beliefs from the Bronze Age to modern times, as also evident in the rich ethnographic material documented in the 19th century by, for instance, the Grimm brothers, Wilhelm Mannhardt and James G. Frazer. In archaeology, however, apart from using this wealth of documentation as analogies or inspirational sources, until recently this knowledge could not be included as actual culture history connecting continents and belief systems from Norway to Nepal or Ireland to India (see Kaliff & Oestigaard 2020, 2022, 2023a). With the breakthrough of aDNA studies addressing Indo-European questions from 2015 onwards, it is now possible to show actual migrations and how flows of people and ideas connect and create continuities on structural levels in history but also how cultural and religious practices and beliefs develop throughout the ages in processes that may be called cultural and religious "dialectification": distinct traditions have a shared origin, enabling both cultural and religious uniqueness and independent historic development within an overall Indo-European frame and fundamental structure.

In this chapter, we will address aspects of Indo-European afterlives by a comparative analysis of the funeral and fire rites of Bronze Age Håga in Sweden. This is the richest and most spectacular Bronze Age grave in Sweden structured around cremation and intensive uses of fire. Thus, we will discuss and analyse three main themes. First, we will present the great Håga funeral in a Scandinavian context; second, we will contextualise the finds by exploring parts of the 19th and early 20th century ethnography documented in Europe with a focus on agricultural and seasonal rites and fires and, finally, highlight historic and contemporary funeral practices, cremations and fire rituals in India and Nepal, before summarising with a concluding discussion.

2. The Håga cremation and burial complex

Located some few kilometres west of Uppsala, the Håga grave mound was excavated in 1902–1903. The mound itself has a diameter of 43 to 49 metres and a height varying between 6.25 and 8.75 metres, since it was built in a slightly sloping topography, giving the mound a great visual and monumental impression from the surroundings (Figure 1).

Figure 1. The Håga mound, Uppsala, Sweden. Photo: Terje Oestigaard
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Greater than the look was the actual construction and the finds. Before the mound as built, a huge cremation took place at the gravel level where the mound later was built. This pyre seems to have had a diameter of 7 to 8 metres, indicating the monumental size of the fire. After the fire was extinguished, the bones were collected and a layer of stone was constructed as a kind of platform. This stone platform was about 40 metres in diameter and 1 metre in height. On top of this stone platform, a layer of oak logs was put, mostly oriented in an east–west direction, creating a ritual platform. On this oak-logged platform, the cremated remains of the king or chieftain was laid in an oak-log coffin and this coffin was placed in a chamber also built of oak. The grave chamber, with precious grave gifts, was covered by a huge cairn, covering the bottom of the mound and measuring some 40 metres in diameters. The cairn, having a height of about 4.5 metres, was covered by turfs creating the mound (Figure 2) (Almgren 1905).

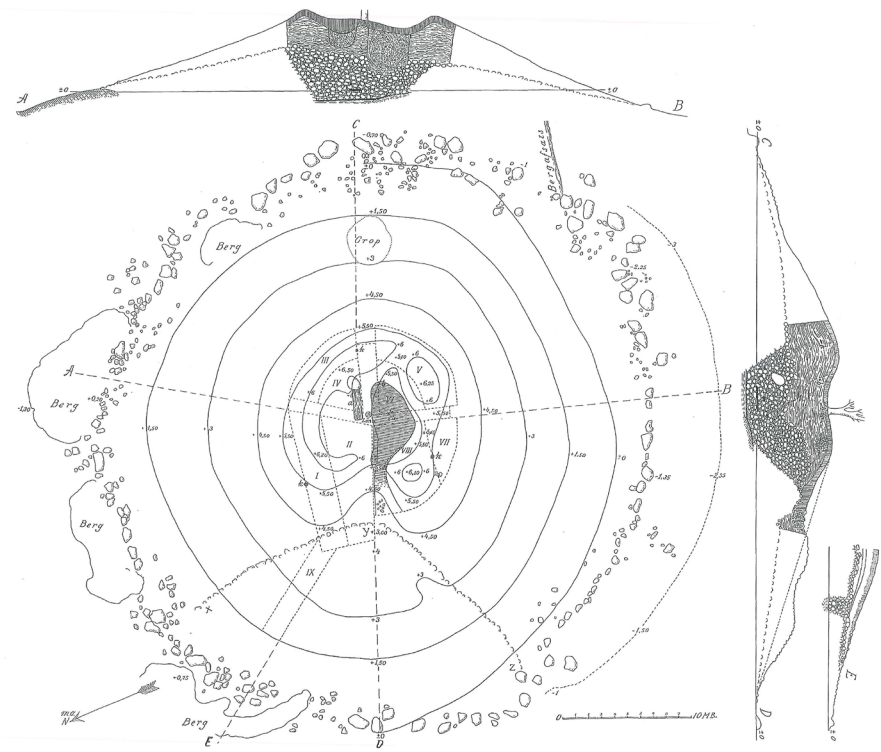

Figure 2. Documentation of the excavation and the complete mound. From Almgren 1905, plate III. License: CC-PD.

The Håga burial is the northernmost oak-log burial in Scandinavia and the closest parallels are the Danish oak-log burials, of which Egtved is the most famous. However, the Egtved burial is several centuries older than Håga, which was dated to period IV or the beginning of the Late Bronze Age (Almgren 1905). The dating places the Håga burial and the construction of the mound around 1000 BCE, or in the time span 1100–900 BCE (Ullén & Drenzel 2018: 129; 2022: 9–10).

Håga was for a long time forgotten but, after more than a century in the shadows of Old Uppsala, in recent years there has been a growing interest in Håga (Kaliff & Oestigaard 2018, 2023b; Oestigaard 2022; Ojala & Østigård 2022; Zachrisson, Ullén & Olausson 2022). There are several reasons why Håga regains attention and fame (Figure 3). Apart from the fact that the grave is similar to the Danish oak-log burials in splendour and elite status, Håga surpasses all other Nordic counterparts in richness. In Sweden, about 150 gold artefacts and fragments are known from the Late Neolithic and the Bronze Age, and about 50 of these were found in the Håga burial. Although many of these gold items are small or fragmented, it is nevertheless astonishing that about a third of all gold finds (in numbers, not in weight) from this time era in Sweden come from one grave: Håga (Eriksson 2008, 2022). As the excavator Oscar Almgren points out, "[t]his magnificent grave find from the Bronze Age Period IV, so far north in Sweden and in Uppsala, was by all means a total surprise" (Almgren 1905: 45). There are yet other finds and reasons that make Håga exceptional by all standards.

Near the mound itself there are two stone foundation houses, also called cult houses. In Sweden, there are documented more than 60 houses of this type, and the largest at Håga, also called the "Håga Church" (Figure 4), have outer walls measuring 45 metres in length and 18 metres in width, with the inner room measuring 33 metres in length and 5 metres in width (Olausson & Göthberg 2022: 78). These dimensions make this cult house perhaps the biggest in Sweden, although there is another 45-metre-long cult house next to the Kivik cairn in Skåne. The average length of the cult houses is about 19 metres (Victor 2002: 78–79; Goldhahn 2013: 423–424). The oldest dates of this house, as with the other smaller one, are several centuries older than the mound, and it is difficult to say with certainty which of the cult houses is the older one, although the smaller has usually been seen as predating the bigger one (Victor 2002). The "Håga Church" dates back to 1400–1200 BCE, but the use of the house also continues long

Figure 3. Finds from the Håga mound. Photo: Ola Myrin, Statens Historiska museer, Stockholm © License: CC BY.

Figure 4. The cult house known as the "Håga Church". Photo: Terje Oestigaard © License: CC BY-NC.

after the construction of the mound. Although there might have been phases without use and direct continuity, the latest dates are 600–500 BCE (Olausson & Göthberg 2022: 78). In other words, the Håga area has been a central and ritual place for centuries prior to and after the cremation and the construction of the great mound. Also, Håga seems to have been an era and area of extreme ritual intensification and mobilisation. This includes also finds of numerous unburnt animal and human bones found in the mound.

Since Almgren's excavation of the mound, it has been assumed that the bones – animal and human – dated back to the main funeral rite and the construction of the mound itself, but new dating has shown that the animal bones of cattle, pigs and geese were 100 to 200 years older than the cremation of the dead and the mound itself. The dates of the human remains are even more remarkable. There were at least 3 unburnt individuals, who were most likely 300–400 years older that the deceased in the oak-log coffin, dating back to period II (1500–1300 BCE) and most likely to the 14th century (Ullén & Drenzel 2022: 19, 25). In particular, one of the bones, several centuries older, has received a lot

of attention, since it is perhaps one of the clearest examples of ritual cannibalism in Scandinavian prehistory (Kaliff & Oestigaard 2017: 153–156). In the upper layers of the mound, at the depth of just 1 to 1.5 metres, the remains of a 26.5-centimetre-long femur was found. This femur was cleaved in the middle and had sharp cut marks and the intention was probably to get the bone marrow (Figure 5). In Almgren's words, "[t]he only viable conclusion is that humans were sacrificed in a similar way to animals, and, most probably also eaten to honour the dead chief" (Almgren 1905: 44).

Although there are no doubts that the femur is cleaved, a sharp bone fracture in itself is not automatically evidence of ritual cannibalism, since that is human consumption of flesh or bloody parts of a human in a religious context, like a funeral. On the one hand, if such practices have taken place at Håga, the cleaving, extraction and consumption of the bone marrow have most likely happened centuries before the construction and deposition of the bone in the mound. On the other hand, an alternative hypothesis some archaeologist put forward in discussions is that the femur was unintentionally destroyed at a later stage when the bone was removed or dug with a spade (although, if this had been the case, one would expect the bone to be crushed instead of clear-cut and cleaved). The latter interpretation is not, however, very likely. When all the unburnt human bones are seen together, they seem to represent a very intentional use and deposition of century old bones. In the Bronze Age, the anatomical knowledge was great and the ritual participants were intimately familiar with handling and circulating human bones – burnt as well as unburnt – from for instance one grave to another. Thus, the bones were almost like relics and the older, unburnt bones in the Håga mound were probably part of an ancestral cult putting emphasis on the importance of generational continuity and spiritual community with the forefathers (Ullén & Drenzel 2022: 19–21, 25).

The bones of the main deceased buried in the mound had another character. In the oak-log coffin, there were found about 790 grams of burnt human remains. The deceased was burnt at temperatures of about or above 850 degrees. It was impossible to determine the biological sex based on the bone material itself but the individual was 40 to 60 years old – probably closer to 60 than 40 – and the find material of swords and razors supports an interpretation that the deceased was a man (although also typical female objects were found) (Ullén & Drenzel 2022: 11). In the following discussion, the gender of the deceased is irrelevant, and, as seen with the Egtved girl, also women got high status elite funerals

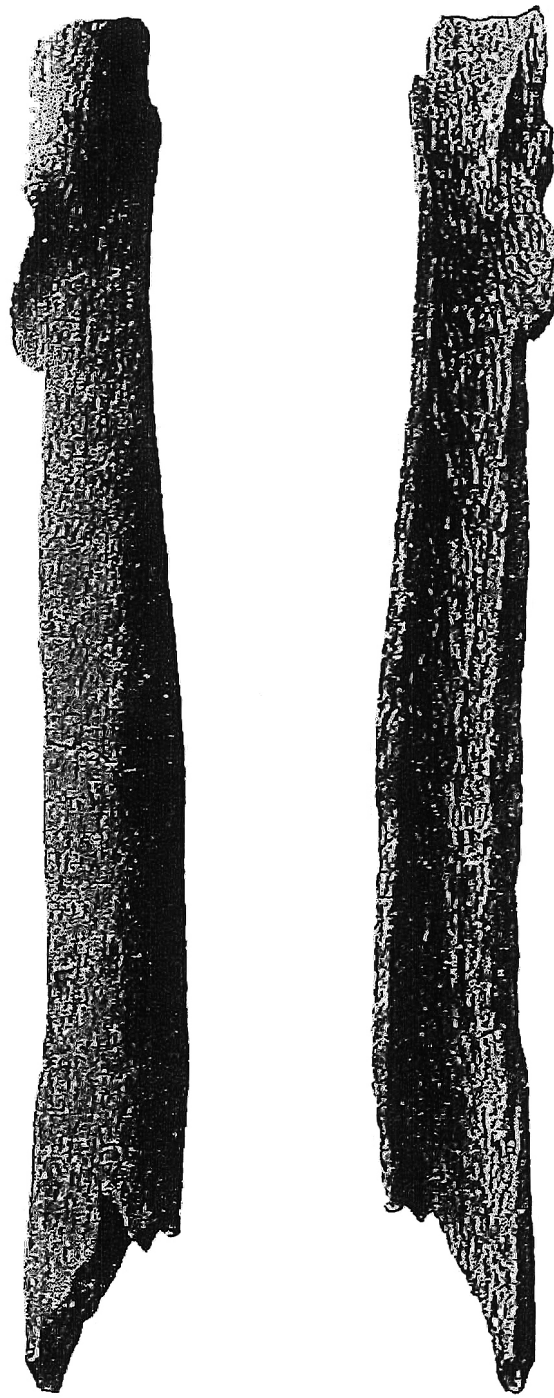

Figure 5. The cleaved femur found in the Håga mound during excavation. From Almgren 1905: 26, fig. 28. License: CC-PD.

and oak-log burials. The presence of almost 800 grams of the deceased's burnt bones is, however, important and represents a substantial amount of cremated remains. By necessity, these bones were collected after the cremation and taken meticulously care of while the stone platform with the oak layer was built. The most likely place and scenario is that the cremated bones were stored in an urn in one of the cult houses, and if the other human bones were not collected from other graves it is plausible that even these together with the animal bones were stored in the cult houses, which were built centuries before the great mound. There are yet other indications that the cult houses had a central ritual role long before the deceased was cremated and the mound constructed.

The documentation of the charcoal layer at the bottom of the mound had, as indicated, a diameter of 7 to 8 metres (Figure 6). This would have been a pyre of great dimensions, but in the excavation report from 1905 Oscar Almgren points out another feature that has not received

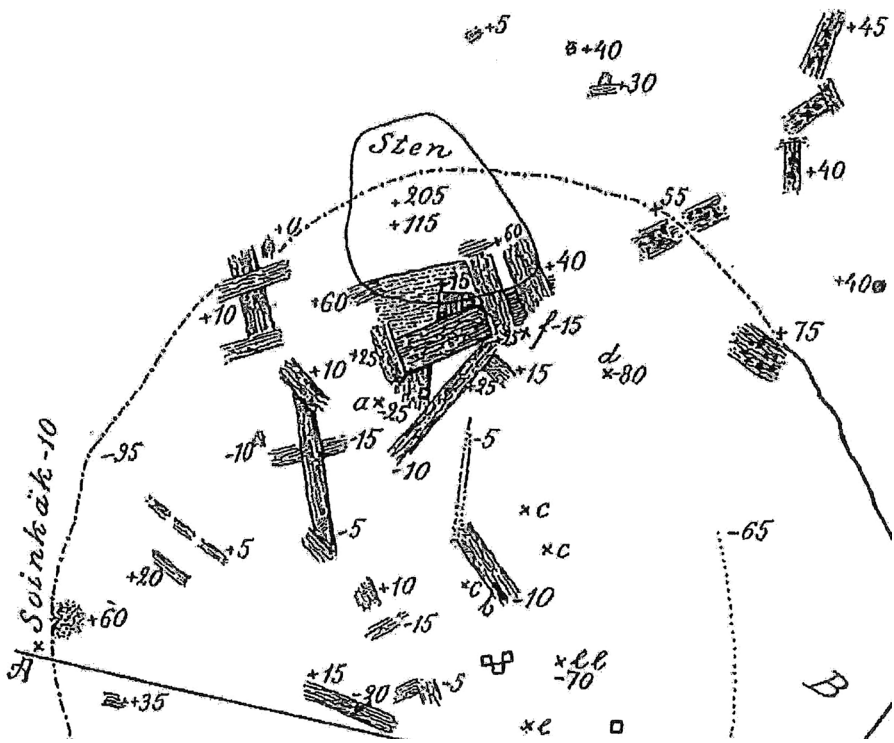

Figure 6. Original documentation of the excavation, 1903. The bold dark line indicates the extent of the charcoal layer at the bottom of the mound. Source: Antikvarisk-topografiska arkivet, Stockholm. License: CC-PD.

much attention: the depth of the charcoal layer. Large parts of the charcoal layer were more than 50 centimetres deep and the greatest depth was 95 centimetres, although one has to be cautious when estimating the exact thicknesses of the layer since the bottom ground was sloping. However, Almgren emphasised that the charcoal layer was substantial and a layer between 0.5 and 1 metre represents fundamentally more than one fire or a single cremation. In fact, even large full-scale cremations may not deposit large amounts of charcoal since the primary aim is to burn and combust everything. An open-air Hindu cremation (Figure 7), on the other hand, is very small, partly since wood is expensive, and may consist of some 300 kilograms or up to 500 kilograms and occasionally more, and the volume of the pyre hardly exceeds 2 cubic metres (Oestigaard 2005: 15).

As a comparative example, Terje Gansum reanalysed and re-excavated parts of the Haugar Viking mound in Tønsberg, Norway. One central find meticulously documented was a thick layer of charcoal and, to figure out the extent of the fire rituals, estimations of the amount of wood necessary for leaving a charcoal layer of this size were conducted. The estimate of the amount of charcoal was based on a radius of 10 metres where the thickness of the charcoal in the outermost

Figure 7. Hindu cremation along Bagmati River, Pashupatinath temple, Kathmandu, Nepal, 2022. Photo: Terje Oestigaard © License: CC BY-NC.

5 metres was 15 centimetres and the thickness in the innermost 5 metres was 30 centimetres. Based on this estimate, the amount of charcoal was 59 cubic metres; if translated into the area of forest that had to be burnt to create that volume of charcoal, assuming the wood was completely burnt, this equals 16–22 hectares of forest, or about the size 4 full-scale football pitches. If we are translating 59 cubic metres of wood into not only the size of the forest but also an estimated weight of the actual wood before burnt, it may amount to about 330 tons of fresh wood (see Gansum 1995: 40–42).

If one compares this to a cremation pyre consisting of some 300 kilograms of wood, 59 cubic metres of charcoal would equal about 1,000 cremations of Hindu modern open-air cremations. Although there are numerous uncertainties with all such estimates, they are nevertheless thought-provoking and good to think with. After today's 1 May or Midsummer bonfires, there is very little charcoal left. It impossible to say with certainty how much wood and how many fires have been burnt at the bottom ground at Håga where the mound was later built, but it is certain that the charcoal layer represents something else and more than just the cremation of the person buried in the mound. The charcoal layer is substantial and may amount to the size of the mound Gansum re-excavated and analysed. Whether the charcoal came from more or fewer fires than pyres equalling 1,000 Hindu cremations is impossible to know, and many pyres and bonfires may have been significantly bigger. In any event, it is evident that there had been many huge fires at Håga prior to the great cremation. This puts emphasis on the cult houses and the ritual activities spanning several centuries earlier than the mound itself. If ceremonial fires had been organised from the cult houses and these had been prominent activities defining the ritual space at Håga for centuries, what kind of Indo-European fires are possible to identify and document in a comparative perspective?

3. Indo-European fire rituals in agriculture and European ethnography

The great Indo-European fire rituals are intimately connected to the agricultural world and the seasonality of the year, which affected humans, animals and the growth forces alike. Håga was constructed at a time when the historic farm was institutionalised. While the earliest agriculture was introduced around 4000–3800 BCE and the revolution in secondary products took place in the period 3000–1500 BCE, from

1200–800 BCE agriculture became the wholly dominant mode of subsistence as north as Uppland and the Håga region. Also, the historical farm with outbuildings and sometimes byres became a dominant feature in the landscape in the period 1000–800 BCE (Welinder 2011: 23, 43). Thus, the era of Håga was a time of agricultural intensification, which is reflected in a ritual mobilisation and extreme and extravagant rituals. It was a total ritualisation of cosmos and an intensification of culture and cosmology. "In Håga, it was not just a single funeral rite, but many, and they included male and female objects or identities, numerous animal offerings, as well as agrarian rites. In other words, it was a totality and a cosmic origin and source of power" (Oestigaard 2022: 65).

In the ethnographic record documented in Europe in the 19th century, the most important and lavish rituals were fire rituals in relation to the agricultural and seasonal festivals (for an in-depth discussion, see Kaliff & Oestigaard 2023a).

Today, the spring and midsummer fires are the most well-known and the midwinter fires centred around "the Yule log [which] was only the winter counterpart of the Midsummer bonfire, kindled within doors instead of in the open air on account of the cold and inclement weather of the season" (Frazer 1913: 247). The Yule log was at the heart of the house – in the hearth, where fire-gods and ancestors also lived. There were also Lenten and Eastern fires, but the most important and biggest fires were the Beltane fires and rituals taking place around 1 May, when the cattle were taken out to the fields or the highlands after the winter. This need-fire was a fire wall of protection between the cattle and dangerous spirits. When the animals passed through the flames of the fires, the heat was too much for the bad spirits following the cattle and they dropped in faint from the animal's saddle or horns, and hence the cattle escaped evil by crossing the smoke and flames (Frazer 1913: 282, 285–286).

Similarly, the Halloween fires in the autumn, when the animals came back home from the pastures, were equally important, and this took place on the last day of October or Allhallow Even, since All Saint's Day and New Year's Day were, in many pastoral societies, the same day. Frazer says: "[T]he annual kindling of a new fire takes place most naturally at the beginning of the year, in order that the blessed influence of the fresh fire may last throughout the whole period of twelve months" (Frazer 1913: 225).

These fire festivals were originally or primarily part of the pastoral worlds, but, given that most farmers keeping animals also cultivated

fields, there were often overlapping rituals taking place more or less at the same time. In many regions and ecological zones the time when the animals were taken out of the barns paralleled to the season of sowing and the return of the animals corresponding to the season of harvesting. Bonfires, therefore, Frazer says, were not only protecting animals but also fertilising the fields: "it appears that the heat of the fires was thought to fertilise the fields, not directly by quickening the seeds in the ground, but indirectly by counteracting the baleful influence of witchcraft or perhaps by burning up the persons of the witches" (Frazer 1913: 156–157).

As part of the harvest festivals, sacrifices were common. It was believed that the spirit of the corn embodied the last sheaf and it was essential for the next year's harvest to catch and transfer it to the next season. The growth force could also embody animals, and the killing and sacrifice of these animals and the ritual consumption were essential in safeguarding and protecting the life forces. Frazer sums up:

> The corn-spirit is conceived as embodiment in an animal; this divine animal is slain, and its flesh and blood are partaken by the harvesters. Thus, the cock, the goose, the hare, the cat, the goat, and the ox are eaten sacramentally by the harvesters, and the pig is eaten sacramentally by ploughmen in spring […] the death of the corn-spirit is represented by killing (in reality or pretence) either his human or his animal representative; and the worshippers partake sacramentally either of the actual body or blood of the representative (human or animal) of the divinity, or of bread made in his likeness. (Frazer 1890: 31, 33)

In the ethnography documented in 19th-century Europe, there are many myths and stories about human sacrifices, involving clubbing people to death, hanging or strangulating them, slitting the throat, killing by decapitation or penetrating the heart with scythes or sickles. In fact, such mock killings were played out as ritual dramas for entertainment throughout Europe. In the archaeological record, on the other hand, one finds evidence of such deadly traumas and ways of killing, indicating that throughout the millennia there has been a shift from real practices to myths or symbolism, and from human sacrifices to animal sacrifices (Kaliff & Oestigaard 2022: 189). Still, it is worth noting how such sacrifices could take place:

> In the neighbourhood of Klausenburg, Transylvania, a cock is buried on the harvest-field in the earth, so that only its head appears. A young man then takes a scythe and cuts off the cock's head at a single stroke. If he fails to do

> this, he is called the Red Cock for a whole year, and people fear that next year's crop will be bad. (Frazer 1890: 9)

With this background, one may return to Håga and the remains of animals and humans, including the cleaved femur that strongly indicates ritual cannibalism. Is it reasonable to suggest that humans may even have been sacrificed in similar ways to the above-mentioned cock? During the excavation it was pointed out that human and animal bones shared my similarities and there were in particular many fragments of jaws, femurs and tibia, and the selection of specific bones strongly suggests that the deposition of the bones were intentional and that one may rule out any argument that the bones were randomly collected and unintentionally deposited. Almgren writes:

> All the other bones were clearly deposited when the mound was built, and there are probably various reasons for their presence. They are all edible animals (except the remains of the fox, which may have been transported by the soil and natural processes); they are all, almost without exception, fragmented, and they are also all thrown in from all directions in distinct layers. It seems obvious that these are remains of meals, partly eaten during the main funeral, and partly or perhaps mainly during the time-consuming job of the building of the mound. The fact that only some bone fragments were found can be explained by the fact that only parts of the mound were investigated and that many of the bones of the consumed animals were never deposited on the mound itself, but thrown on the ground beside the mound where they soon decayed. However, the most peculiar thing is that the parts of unburnt humans that were found were in a similar state to the animal bones. (Almgren 1905: 35)

This description of the bones fits very well with agricultural and seasonal rites and such rituals were part of the great fire festivals. Even the use and consumption of bone marrow makes sense in such rites, since, together with blood or the brain, these are bodily substances embodying the life forces more than any other bodily substances. It is impossible, of course, to say with certainty whether humans partook in ritual meals involving human or animal sacrifices or if these meals were solely given to gods and the ancestors. Still, in archaeology the aim is not to explain away significant finds such as a cleaved femur but to present reasonable interpretations, even if these are not tasteful to everyone. The European ethnography provides sufficient support for interpreting these bones within a seasonal and sacrificial perspective, although there are also other possibilities.

The thick charcoal layer at Håga suggests annual festivals or reoccurring rituals through the decades and probably centuries. An intriguing part of rituals like the Beltane fire festivals is the ways these fires were ignited, but also how they involved the whole community (Figure 8).

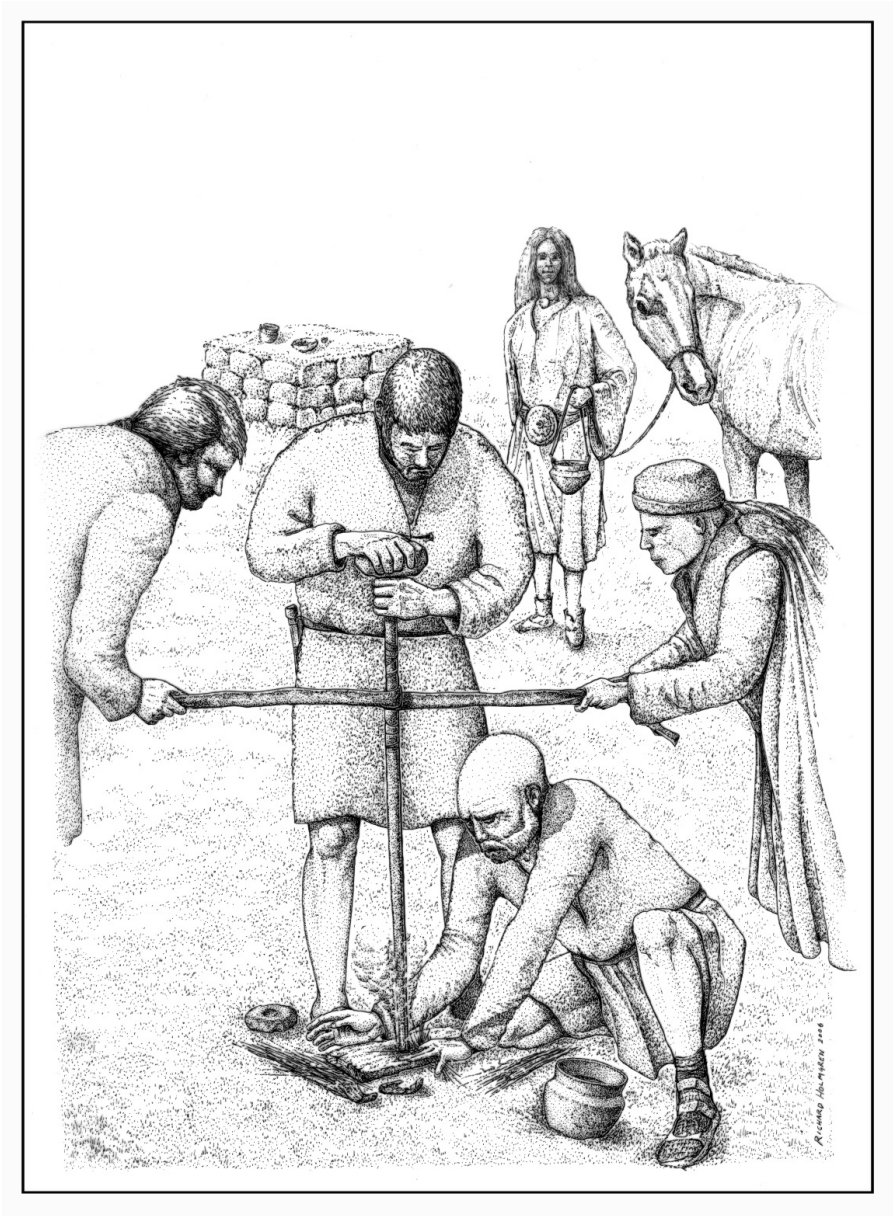

Figure 8. Illustration of making a need-fire or making fire by drilling. From Kaliff 2007: 188, fig. 14. Drawing: Richard Holmgren, ARCDOC
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The Beltane fires were part of the pastoral world and in some places "[t]hey were called bone-fires. The people believed that on that evening and night the witches were abroad and busy casting spells on cattle and stealing cows' milk" (Frazer 1913: 154). In fact, the word "bonfire" means "bone-fire", referring to actual bones being burnt (cf. Kaliff 2007: 166). The Beltane fires were burning away the witches and hurting malevolent animals and people alike. The way these fires were made are instructive, because it links them to the hearth in the household and whole community. "Charred logs and faggots used in the May Beltane were carefully preserved, and from them the next fire was lighted. May fires were always started with old faggots of the previous year, and midsummer from those of the last summer," Marie Trevelyan writes from Wales: "People carried the ashes left after these fires to their homes, and a charred brand was not only effectual against pestilence, but magical in its use. A few of the ashes placed in a person's shoes protected the wearer from any great sorrow or woe" (Trevelyan 1909: 23–24).

There will always variation in the actual ritual practices – even between neighbouring regions there might be a "dialectification", like Marie Trevelyan saying that May fires were always started with old faggots from the last year, whereas at other places the new fires were made by friction of wood but this was not the task of a single person. The new fires were made as a collective rite by as many as 81 men, which Frazer highlights:

> It deserves, further, to be noticed that in North Uist the wood used to kindle the need-fire was oak, and that the nine times nine men by whose exertions the flame was elicited were all first-born sons. Apparently, the first-born son of a family was thought to be endowed with more magical virtue than his younger brothers. (Frazer 1913: 295)

The fertility aspect and the magnitude of these fires is striking, since they involved as many as 81 unmarried and fertile men. Another important aspect that has tremendous implication for the understanding of prehistory is what happened with the ember after the great rituals. All hearths and domestic fires in the parish were extinguished before and during the collective fire ritual, but afterwards all households got their new homely fire from the Beltane fire. Youngsters went from farm to farm giving each family a new fire. Thus, the family fire in the household's hearth came from the collective bonfire and this was annually renewed (Frazer 1890: 251; 1913: 289). This is a scenario that fits very well with the long continuity of fire rituals at Håga and the extensive layers of charcoal at the bottom of the mound, indicating years or perhaps even centuries with fire festivals prior to the grand cremation and funeral.

Figure 9. Eldbjørg – the fire in the hearth. The Viking Hall 'Gildehallen', Midgard Viking Centre, Borre, Norway. Photo: Terje Oestigaard © License: CC BY-NC.

There are yet other fragments of information suggesting a very close connection of these fires with death and cremation. In southern parts of Norway, a particular goddess or female ancestor is documented living in the hearth on each farm and her name is Eldbjørg. Her children

lived in the hearth and she punished the household if they neglected sacrificing milk and bread on a daily basis and beer and meat during celebrations (Olrik & Ellekilde 1926–1951: 254–259; Celander 1928: 351–355; Oestigaard & Kaliff 2020: 86–98). *Eld* means fire, and the name *bjørg* means "protection, help, salvation", in particular in relation to food supply and fodder for the animals. As such, this ancestral fire goddess, living in the hearth, is the protector of the living and the dead but has a particular pastoral origin and function (Figure 9).

Building on the above-mentioned European ethnography and comparative Indo-European religion, there is one particular way an ancestral fire goddess may live and take place in the hearth of the homes: the daily and protective fires in the hearths were taken not only from collective and seasonal fires but also from actual cremation pyres. The ancestral fires were brought back in urns and ceramic pots to the household, linking death and life, the ancestral world and the ancestors as protectors of the living and the future (Kaliff & Oestigaard 2023a: 79–82).

4. Moving embers: Vedic fires and Hindu cremations

Although we usually think about flames when we talk about fires, in ritual practices it is the ember and glowing charcoal that contains the fire – the flames ignite from within and consume the wood and the fire is kept alive by the glowing embers. And this ember is portable and carried in ceramic pots – in the past and the present.

The traditional Hindu practices may give hints of how the ritual fires were used also in prehistoric Indo-European contexts. Being a householder, or in other words being married, contained numerous ritual obligations and a special role and importance was put on the fire from the wedding ceremony. If the Brahman was an Agnihotra, meaning that he chose to observe complex fire rituals for the rest of his life, he had to protect and worship the fire in daily rituals (Staal 1996). In fact, this ritual fire was brought from his father-in-law's house during the wedding and, as long as his wife was alive, the fire was not allowed to be extinguished (Stevenson 1920: 107). Fire rituals were a central part of the weddings and brought from the bride's house. "Whilst they are looking at each other, the priest puts a fire of burning charcoal into the square fenced in with the string and earthen pots. […] During all the remaining wedding ceremonies this fire must never be allowed to go out" (Stevenson 1920: 79).

Among orthodox Brahmins, this fire should be kept burning continuously throughout the marriage and used to light the husband's

cremation pyre in death. David M. Knipe explains in detail that, since the new marriage fire is actually a continuation of the father-in-law's marriage fire:

> The certified Veda pandit and his wife may now establish residence, take embers in a fire pan (*ukha*) from the marriage in her parents' home and set a domestic fire for the new "household," either within or outside the joint family in which he has grown up. The couple will now make daily offerings (*homa*) into this single fire, the *aupasana*, also called the household (*grhya*) or domestic (*smarta*) fire. (Knipe 2015: 34–35)

The continuity of the lineage and fathers having sons to mourn and conduct their cremations are also illustrated by the sons getting their marriage fire from the father-in-law's marriage fire. As part of the fire rituals, the newly wedded couple undergoes an initiatory death and rebirth consecration (Knipe 2015: 45), and this wedding fire is used as the cremation fire. Priests may also have three fires or hearths, and during the cremation of a priest:

> Embers from each hearth were then dropped into the *kunda*, terra-cotta pots. […] These were carried in front of the body out the door and down the path by [the] son…Embers from [the] three hearths were now transferred a final time onto [the priest's] body, the *ahavaniya* offering fire beside his head, the *daksinagni* beside his chest, the *garha-patya* cooking fire by his right thigh, each igniting straw that then set wood alight. Within three hours [the priest's] body was no more, his *agni-hotra* fires being burned together and conjoined as Agni. (Knipe 2015: 34–35)

The ritual household fire not only cremates the householder or priest; it also dies on the cremation pyre. In this case, the marriage fire was also the cremation fire, brought from the domestic hearth, but there are also examples of fires being carried the other way or uses of cremation fires as domestic or household fires, although they are rare.

In Varanasi or Kashi in India, the "City of Light", cremation pyres burn all day and night and it is the most auspicious place for a Hindu to be cremated, whereupon the ashes are given to the holy river Ganga. The holiest cremation ground is the Manikarnika Ghat and here there is a particular temple with a holy and venerated cremation fire. In Varanasi, the cremations are conducted by a special group of undertakers known as Dom (Parry 1994). "In brief, their main role in the death ritual of all castes is to arrange the funeral pyre, provide the wood and sacred fire, which is kept alive perennially," Meena Kaushik writes.

"The sacred fire is seen to symbolise the fire of the ascetic Śiva. It is auspicious and kept alight perennially. It is believed that if it were not kept alight, misfortunes would strike the Doms" (Kaushik 1976: 269). This special fire is surrounded by many myths and specific practices. It is perpetual and must never die and some say that it is 3,500 years old. It is constantly refuelled by burnt logs from cremation pyres and thereby kept alive by the Doms in the temple at the ghat. The Dom Raja, the king of the cremators, and his family, also use these logs and the fires from cremations when cooking their daily food. This fire should also be used to light each new cremation. Thus, it is a perpetual cremation fire: each cremation should be lit by this fire and burnt logs from cremations refuel the fire making it perpetual – it is a cosmogonic fire and ritual.

There is yet another ritual scenario found in Vedic traditions that may have relevance for understanding many archaeological contexts, especially those with great time depth in seemingly continuous ritual performances, like the thick charcoal layer at Håga. While the Vedic fire altars are often square stone constructions (Figure 10), the importance is the fire itself and hence altars can be heaps of fire cracked stones or merely huge charcoal layers (Kaliff 2007), since the latter are

Figure 10. Fire altar. The Shivaratri festival at Pashupatinath, 2022. Photo: Terje Oestigaard © License: CC BY-NC.

testimonies of returning ritual activities at a particular place defining a holy space. In Vedic traditions, the fire altar was a means for obtaining immortality for kings, royalty and other noblemen. In this process, the body was restored and mummified before it was burnt and the fire was the link between this and the other world; the mummification restored life to the dead body and cremation revitalised it. It has therefore been argued that the actual cremation equals the fire altar (Levin 1930).

In Hindu and Vedic thought, the body is an altar and a miniature of the cosmos and hence a source of the sacred. Restoring life through cremation has also other implications and a special practice is the cremation of a surrogate body if the body is lost, for instance if the deceased drowned at sea or disappeared in the mountains. A surrogate body or the effigy is made out of 360 stalks, seen as identical to the number of bones in a human body but also representing the days in a year. The effigy becomes food for the fire and in a ritual context the body contains food-substances, expressed in the statement "whether I live or die, I am barley". Apart from rituals to ensure the spiritual elements or the soul as part of the effigy and the cremation, the time dimension involved in these rituals is of particular interest. In general, there was a time limit of 12 years to declare someone lost as being dead, although one text mentions 15 years as the time for declaring lost people dead. However, even when declared dead, the surrogate body of the deceased could not be burnt immediately; the family had to wait before burning the effigy until the deceased would have been one hundred years old. In other cases, if there was a partial recovery of the body, the bones were wrapped in deerskin, which was explicitly seen as the skin of the deceased. In the latter case, the ritual fire of the dead fire-holder was kept alive until his bones were brought back to the village, whereupon he was cremated in his own ritual fire (Timalsina 2009).

5. The great fires at Håga

Returning to Håga and the heavy charcoal layer at the bottom of the mound, the Vedic or Hindu parallels are not identical to the ritual practices that took place outside Uppsala some 3,000 years ago but, if seen as a process of dialectification and ritual variation within an overall Indo-European cultural and religious tradition, one may discuss different ritual and religious scenarios.

Given the time depth at Håga, evident by not only the several century older cult houses but also the bones of humans and animals found

in the mound, Håga has been a ritual place since long before the mound was constructed. Also, although there has not been multiple C14 dates of the various parts of the charcoal layer, it seems reasonable to assume that there were a number of fires before and apart from the cremation of the main deceased buried in the oak-log coffin in the oak chamber in the cairn.

From the western examples in Ireland and Norway to the eastern examples in India and Nepal, there is a structural pattern in the fire rituals. The fire goddess Eldbjørg lived in the hearth of the household with the ancestors. In the Beltane or 1 May fires, the household fires were extinguished before the collective fires were made, and embers from this were used to reignite all household fires. Importantly, both Eldbjørg and the 1 May fires were closely associated with cattle and thereby an early pastoral lifestyle and cosmology. From India and Nepal, the marriage fire was used to light the cremation pyre and, in Varanasi, burning logs from cremations refuelled the perpetual cosmic fire at the cemetery, which was also used for cooking.

From this perspective, it is reasonable to assume that cosmic fire rituals played a central role in institutionalising the practices at Håga and thereby also an Indo-European cosmology. These fires fit very well with pastoral lifeworlds, but the era of Håga was also a time in history when agriculture intensified and the historic farm was established. Thus, the finds, in particular the bones of humans and animals, must also be seen in a perspective that combines agriculture and the life-giving processes in nature with death and new life of humans as ancestors and grow forces in field and animals, as evident in European ethnography from the 19th century.

The bones, including the cleaved femur, strongly suggest an intentional and deliberate reuse of older bodily parts. Whether they were used as effigies is uncertain, and in the Vedic examples the surrogate bodies were burnt and in Håga the bones are unburnt. Still, bones in general are a very efficient way of symbolising or rebuilding bodies. Given that all unburn bones found in Håga are older than the main person cremated and buried, there were prolonged rituals that actively built on and included past ritual practices and bodily remains of human and animals.

6. Conclusion

The spectacular finds and riches of gold in the Håga mound have for obvious reasons gained most attention in analyses of this unique grave

complex, but Håga may still contain new and other empirical entrances to a deeper understanding of Bronze Age cosmology in Scandinavia in general and the specific Indo-Europeanisation process that took place in particular. The new analyses of the cult houses and the dates of the bones of humans and animals have revealed hitherto unknown time depths, which make the history of Håga even more complex. It seems that the main ritualisation of the area took place at a time when intensified agriculture was institutionalised in this region, and this economic and technological process was accompanied in tandem with a cosmological and ritual intensification that has hardly taken place in Scandinavia before or after. Central in this ritualisation were fire rituals that in later historic documentation were intimately interwoven in agricultural and pastoral worlds and livelihoods, and these fires were also the cremation fires, uniting the worlds of the living and the dead. If the great fire rituals at Håga were the cosmological frame for intensive and partly new ecological adaptations, it also highlights that the growth forces were literally rooted in death and the ancestors. The afterlife of the deceased forefathers and ancestors was the source of life for the descendants and the living, and the fires connected the realms and gained strength through the ritualisation at Håga. It was a place where the forces of fire were a constant source for the future and where people returned to conduct new fire rituals. From this perspective, there could not have been a better place to burn and bury their greatest leader of all time.

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10. Mourning among the speakers of Proto-Indo-European
*$\hat{k}eh_2d$- ‘to fall’ and ‘to mourn’

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Abstract

This chapter argues for the identity of the two roots *$\hat{k}eh_2d$- ‘to fall’ and *$\hat{k}eh_2d$- ‘to mourn; to be emotionally distraught’. It is suggested that the original meaning ‘to fall’ was metonymically extended to apply specifically to ‘falling down as the result of strong emotional distress’, a cross-culturally very common ritualized behaviour found in relation to the death of a relative. It is furthermore proposed that the suppletive paradigm of Vedic non-present *śad*- ‘to fall’ (from *$\hat{k}eh_2d$-), present *śīyate*, is an instance of weak suppletion, i.e. that the apparently etymologically isolated present allomorph *śīya*- in fact is from the root *$\hat{k}eh_2d$- via a Proto-Indo-European *$\underset{\frown}{i}e/o$-present *$\hat{k}h_2h_1\underset{\frown}{i}e/o$- < *$\hat{k}h_2d$-$\underset{\frown}{i}e/o$- (with the well-established, but sporadic, change of *d > *h_1). Finally, it is argued that the evidence for a root *$\hat{k}e\underset{\frown}{i}(H)$- ‘to fall’ may be disregarded, with OIr. *ciid* ‘cries’ and MW *ciawr* ‘falls’ deriving from the present allomorph *$\hat{k}h_2h_1\underset{\frown}{i}e/o$- also seen in Vedic and with Brittonic *$ku\underset{\frown}{i}ð$- ‘to fall’ deriving from a newly created Proto-Celtic *$\underset{\frown}{i}e/o$-present *$kād$-$\underset{\frown}{i}e/o$- based on the non-present allomorph *$\hat{k}eh_2d$-, rather than from a *d*-present *$ke\underset{\frown}{i}$-*de/o*-.

1. Ritualized mourning[1]

> At the ritual announcement of the death, which is made by a man, the women of the tribe keen and wail and throw themselves to the ground.

[1] I am grateful for discussion with the participants at the LAMP symposium *Indo-European Afterlives* and for useful comments from Marina Zorman.

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> At times they will strike themselves with sharp objects. It is expected that the men of the community will restrain the women from seriously injuring themselves. The men step forward and pull the weapons from the women's hands and throw them out of reach. The women usually respond to this by ceasing their attempts at self-injury. […] The men of the tribe will also keen at times, particularly if the dead person was a close relative; but the more common emotional expression of the men is venting anger by dancing. (Golden 2009: 85)

The above quote describes the typical behaviour following the announcement of the death of a tribal member among the Yolngu, an Australian indigenous people. The behaviour may seem strange to Western readers but it is cross-culturally far from unusual. A casual trawl through descriptions of mourning rituals and behaviour in different cultures in different periods[2] reveals a number of recurring elements relating to the immediate, short-term expression of grief, typically carried out at the announcement of the death or at the funeral. The reactions may be grouped into the following main categories:

- weeping and wailing
- falling to the ground
- throwing or rubbing dirt/dust/ashes on the head and/or body
- tearing of clothes
- beating the head and/or chest
- pulling or tearing out one's hair
- lacerating the skin.

As in the example from the Yolngu above, the specific reactions often fall among gender lines. In other cultures, reactions may be tied to social standing; for example, servants and slaves are expected to react in specific ways to the death of their master. At times, mourning may even become institutionalized with the development of professional mourners, people who are compensated for performing ritualized acts of mourning. However, gender differences, societal stratification and the professionalization of mourning, while interesting in their own right, will not be treated in this chapter.

[2] E.g. the medieval Byzantine Empire (Maguire 1977: 126–132), medieval France (Spitzer 1945: 264), ancient Israel (Olyan 2004: 29–31; Medina 2008), ancient Ugarit (Olyan 2004: 31 fn. 13), ancient Egypt (Iancu 2017: 60 and fn. 22).

2. Mourning among the speakers of Proto-Indo-European

Considering how widespread the behaviours listed in Section 1 are, as reactions to the death of a relative or prominent member of society, it is probable that some or all of these behaviours were present among the speakers of Proto-Indo-European.[3] But how would one go from observing that this behaviour would be probable to actually reconstructing how speakers of Proto-Indo-European behaved under such circumstances?

One way would be to look at attestations of relevant behaviour in the early texts in the various early Indo-European branches (cf. Sergent 2023: 238; West 2007: 498–499). Achilles' reaction to the death of Patroklos provides an illustrative example:

> Iliad, XVIII, 22–31:
> ὣς φάτο, τὸν δ᾽ ἄχεος νεφέλη ἐκάλυψε μέλαινα:
> ἀμφοτέρῃσι δὲ χερσὶν ἑλὼν κόνιν αἰθαλόεσσαν
> χεύατο κὰκ κεφαλῆς, χαρίεν δ᾽ ἤσχυνε πρόσωπον:
> νεκταρέῳ δὲ χιτῶνι μέλαιν᾽ ἀμφίζανε τέφρη.
> αὐτὸς δ᾽ ἐν κονίῃσι μέγας μεγαλωστὶ τανυσθεὶς
> κεῖτο, φίλῃσι δὲ χερσὶ κόμην ἤσχυνε δαΐζων.
> δμῳαὶ δ᾽ ἃς Ἀχιλεὺς λῃΐσσατο Πάτροκλός τε
> θυμὸν ἀκηχέμεναι μεγάλ᾽ ἴαχον, ἐκ δὲ θύραζε
> ἔδραμον ἀμφ᾽ Ἀχιλῆα δαΐφρονα, χερσὶ δὲ πᾶσαι
> στήθεα πεπλήγοντο, λύθεν δ᾽ ὑπὸ γυῖα ἑκάστης.
>
> So he spoke: a black cloud of grief closed over Achilles.
> With both hands he gathered up the dark grimy dust,
> scattered it over his head, befouled his handsome features
> and on his fragrant tunic the black ash settled.
> with his own hands he tore and defiled his hair.
> There stretched in the dust, great in his greatness he lay;
> Those maidservants won as spoils by Achilles and Patroklos
> shrieked aloud in their heartfelt anguish, ran out of doors,
> stood around warlike Achilles, all with their hands
> beat on their breasts, the limbs of all were weakened.
> (Translation from Green 2015: 339)

[3] Proto-Indo-European here being used as a short-hand for what is strictly speaking mostly Proto-Core-Indo-European, given the absence of evidence from Anatolian.

As can be seen, this passage displays many of the reactions listed in Section 1: descent to the ground, covering oneself in dirt, tearing of hair, wailing and beating the chest. Very similar behaviours can be observed in the Roman tradition:

> [I]n literary sources describing the mourning of the common people or of a crowd, both men and women were shown to recite laments and express similar gestures of sadness: pulling the hair, scratching the cheeks till blood was flowing, beating the head and (bare) chest, falling on the earth, putting the ashes of the extinguished hearth on the head were all ritual duties (*iusta*) of mourners towards the dead […]. (Erker 2022: 44–45)

However, even the oldest Indo-European texts are quite removed in time from the probable Proto-Indo-European period and there is no guarantee that the behaviours described in the texts, even if attested in different branches, necessarily date back to a shared proto-stage (unless they are highly specific and unusual in nature).

Another way to approach the question would be to look for depictions of mourning behaviour in the archaeological record. While this could potentially be a useful approach (and may be applied, e.g., to the Mycenaean period, as Iakovidis 1966 and Kramer-Hajos 2015 do), I am not aware of any such material from a context that could plausibly be associated the Proto-Indo-European period.

Finally, we may try to use the comparative method of linguistic reconstruction to demonstrate the status of the concept as belonging to a shared pre-stage. This is the approach attempted in the present chapter. Specifically, I will use a subset of reconstructed vocabulary displaying what may be described as metonymic extension, that is, where a reconstructable root is found with a primary, "basic" meaning and one or more secondary ones arguably derived from the primary one. The secondary usage may imply a specific kind of behaviour, in the present chapter argued to be specifically related to mourning.

3. Proto-Indo-European **pleh₂k-/*pleh₂g-*

A probable instance of metonymic extension is provided by the reflexes of the verbal root commonly reconstructed as **pleh₂k-/*pleh₂g-* (*LIV*²: 484–485). The basic meaning of this appears to have been something like 'to beat, to hit, to slap'. This is directly continued in Greek πλήσσω 'I strike', Latin *plangō* 'I strike, hit', *plāga* 'a wound' and Baltic, exemplified by Lith. *plàkti* 'to beat'. However, next to this we also find Latin

plangō 'I beat the head or the chest as a sign of mourning; bewail, weep'[4] (often with a part of the body, e.g. *pectus*, *faciem*, as the object). The later Slavic reflexes of PSlav. **plakati* only have the meaning 'to cry, to weep, to lament' and the Germanic reflex **flōkan-* turns up with the meaning 'to clap, to strike' (as a sign of joy or grief) in Old English *flócan*, the Gothic meaning is something like 'to bewail, to mourn' (Goth. *faíflokun* 'they mourned'), whereas we find a deverbal *fluoh* 'a curse' in Old High German (cf. Modern German *fluchen* 'to curse'). Based on these attestations we may assume that the specific root **pleh₂k-*/**pleh₂g-*, which is just one out of several roots reconstructable with a meaning 'to hit, to strike', was used not only about 'hitting *something*' but also specifically about 'hitting *oneself*' as an expression of emotional distress (typically, but maybe not exclusively, sorrow). Consequently, this root may be plausibly reconstructed for the common ancestor with both a primary, basic meaning and a more specialized meaning relating to a specific behaviour.

4. PIE 1. *$\hat{k}$*eh₂d-* 'to fall' and 2. *$\hat{k}$*eh₂d-* 'sorrow; hatred'

This takes us to another possible example of what may be a metonymic extension of a root. In light of the frequent act of 'falling to the ground' as a physical manifestation of grief (cf. Section 1 above), I will propose that the PIE root 2. *$\hat{k}$*eh₂d-* 'sorrow; hatred' developed by metonymic extension from 1. *$\hat{k}$*eh₂d-* 'to fall', just like **pleh₂k-*/**pleh₂g-*, can be reconstructed with a secondary meaning 'to express grief (by hitting oneself)' directly developed from the primary meaning 'to slap, to hit'.[5] We shall first review the linguistic material.

4.1. PIE 1. *$\hat{k}$*eh₂d-* 'to fall (down)'

The reconstruction of Proto-Indo-European verbal root 1. *$\hat{k}$*eh₂d-* 'to fall (down)' is primarily based on the following evidence:[6]

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[4] The secondary meaning is continued in the later Romance languages, in e.g. OFr. *plaindre*, It. *piangere* 'to weep, to cry'.

[5] The idea that the similarity between the two roots is more than accidental is not completely new (see e.g. von Planta 1892: 327). Recently, Willi (2021: 70–71) has suggested that the two roots are one and the same and that the meaning 'sorrow; hatred' developed from a metaphorical usage of 'falling down', i.e. as 'emotional breakdown', 'emotional collapse'. This could indeed be the case and would be difficult to disprove.

[6] Nominal derivatives are found in e.g. Ved. *parṇa-śadá-* 'leaf-fall', Lat. *cāsus* 'a fall', *cadāver* 'a corpse' and possibly PCelt. **kassa/orV-* 'hail', i.e. 'that which falls', with reflexes in OIr. *casair*, ModW *cesair*, MBret. *quaserch*.

Lat. *cadō, cadere* 'to fall' < pres. **ḱh₂d-e/o-*
Ved. *śad-*[7] in *śaśāda* 'has fallen' < perf. **ḱe-ḱoh₂d-*, *śatsyati* < desid. **ḱeh₂d-si̯e/o-*
Gr. (Hom.) κεκάδοντο 'they retreated' (i.e. 'fell back') < aor. **(ḱe-)ḱh₂d-e/o-*[8]

The reconstruction given here, **ḱeh₂d-*, is far from universally accepted, however. It follows Lubotsky (1981: 134), who argues for the loss of laryngeals in roots ending in **VHD-* when followed by an additional consonant. Following this, a desiderative **ḱeh₂d-si̯e/o-* would yield the attested *śatsyati* regularly.

If this development of **-VHD-* is not accepted, it is possible that an original alternation between full- and long-grade *ā* (in **ḱVh₂d-*) and zero-grade *i/ī* (in **ḱh₂d-*) was regularized to a more normal long-grade *ā* and a full- and zero-grade *a* (back-formed from e.g. the 3sg. Perf. *śaśāda*). In general, expected root ablaut between *-āC-* and *-ī/iC-* is poorly preserved in Indic and there may be a drift towards a more typical full-grade *-aC-*.[9] Likewise, the root vocalism of the Latin perfect *cecidī* 'fell', from **ḱe-ḱoh₂d-e*, would have to be analogical to the short vowel in the present tense *cadō* < **ḱh₂d-*[10] and the plural forms of the perfect, **ḱe-ḱh₂d-*.

One could alternatively reconstruct the root as **ḱh₂ed-*, as *LIV*² (318 fn. 1) tentatively proposes, provided that **ḱh₂-* is not an illicit Proto-Indo-European initial cluster and that it is not expected to give Gr. **kʰ-*. Finally, one could reconstruct the root as **ḱad-*, as *LIV*² (318) and Bendahman (1993: 72–74) do. While this would remove the need for invoking analogy or controversial sound laws, it would come with the cost of having to reconstruct a verbal root with *a*-vocalism. Going forward, I will, for the sake of simplicity, refer to the root as **ḱeh₂d-*, while not necessarily ruling out the alternative reconstructions **ḱad-* and **ḱh₂ed-*.

4.2. PIE 2. **ḱeh₂d-* 'mourning, sorrow'

The phonological reconstruction of 2. **ḱeh₂d-* 'mourning, sorrow' is less disputed, with the modern consensus favouring the presence of a

[7] This root displays the main allomorphs *śī-* (in the present tense, discussed below in Section 5) and *śat-* (in the causative *śātáyati*, presumably secondarily from *śad-*).
[8] Discussed by Bendahman (1993: 74).
[9] Compare PIE **su̯eh₂d-* 'to become sweet' and **peh₂ĝ-* 'to fasten', which yield Vedic full-grades *s(u)vad-* and *paj-* with *ă*. According to *LIV*² (461, 606–607), these were influenced by the nasal presents, **ph₂-n̥-ĝ-* and **suh₂-n̥-d-*, which is possible but hardly certain.
[10] Cf. Lat. Pres. *pangō* < PIE **ph₂-n-g*, Perf. *pepigī* ← PIE **pe-poh₂g-*.

post-vocalic laryngeal. The attested reflexes are consequently derived from either a full-grade *$\hat{k}eh_2d$- or a zero-grade *$\hat{k}h_2d$-. Reflexes of this root are mainly attested in nominal formations (*IEW*: 517; *EIEC*: 259; Mallory & Adams 2006: 343–344; Stüber 2002: 114–115):

*$\hat{k}eh_2d$-*es*- > Gr. neut. κῆδος, Dor. κᾶδος 'anxiety, grief, sorrow; funeral rites'
*$\hat{k}h_2d$-*es*- > PGerm. neut. *s*-stem **hat-az/iz*- 'hatred' (e.g. Goth. *hatis*)
*$\hat{k}eh_2d$-*V*-[11] > PCelt. **kādV*- > PBrit. **kɔð* (MW *kawð* 'anger, wrath'; MBret. *cuez* 'regret, anguish')
*$\hat{k}h_2d$-*ti*-/*$\hat{k}h_2d$-*s*-*i*- > PCelt. **kassi*- 'hatred' (OIr. *cais* 'hatred; love', MW *cas*, MBret. *cas* 'hatred')
*$\hat{k}(e)h_2d$-*o*-/-*i*-[12] > Osc. Gsg. *cadeis* 'enmity'
*$\hat{k}eh_2d$-*ro*- > Avest. *sādra*- 'grief'

A sole verbal formation is found, in Gr. κήδομαι 'I am concerned for, I care for; I mourn'. It is unclear if this may be projected back to Proto-Indo-European (as *LIV*^{2}: 319 does). The problem presented by the semantic range of the reflexes, from 'sorrow' and 'regret' to 'anger' and 'hatred', while substantial, is hardly insurmountable. The semantic range was explained by Porzig (1942: 293; see also Stüber 2002: 115) as being due to the word originating in a very specific context, namely the violent death of a relative:

> The semantic diversification of the word family in Greek indicates that the term originally referred to an emotion arising in connection with blood relatives. More specifically, Homeric usage shows that κῆδος first of all denotes the emotional response to the violent death of a kinsman. This usage provides the semantic bridge to the meanings attested in Germanic and Celtic, suggesting that the original sense was a psychological state triggered by the killing of a blood relative, one in which grief, hatred and the obligation to avenge were still undifferentiated.[13]

[11] The original stem class of PBrit. **kɔð* cannot be recovered. It is fully possible that it reflects an old neuter *s*-stem and that it accordingly constitutes a precise cognate of Gr. κῆδος 'sorrow'.

[12] Only attested in the Gsg. The ending *-eis* at first sight points to an *i*- or *o*-stem. However, the Gsg. of neuter *s*-stems does not appear to be attested in Oscan. Therefore it can strictly speaking not be completely ruled out that the expected Gsg. **-es-es* > **-es* was replaced by *-eís* from the *i*-stems (like in the *o*-stems).

[13] Porzig 1942: 293: "Die Bedeutungsverzweigung der Sippe im Griechischen zeigt, daß es sich um ein Gefühl in Beziehung auf Blutsverwandte handelt, und zwar geht aus Homer hervor, daß κῆδος zunächst die Gemütsbewegung beim gewaltsamen Tode eines Verwandten ist. Damit ist die Brücke zur Bedeutung des Wortes im Germanischen und im Keltischen geschlagen, und der ursprüngliche Sachgehalt ist also die seelische Haltung, wenn ein Verwandter getötet worden ist, in der ungeschieden Trauer, Haß und Verpflichtung zur Rache beieinander sind."

While this explanation is not strictly necessary, given the semantic instability of words designating emotions, it fits remarkably well with the idea that **ḱeh₂d-* 'sorrow, hatred' developed as a secondary meaning from **ḱeh₂d-* 'to fall', given that falling to the ground is one of the behaviours observed cross-culturally exactly in the situation outlined by Porzig, i.e. the death of a relative (although not necessarily a violent death).

Traditionally, the nominal formations in **ḱeh₂d-* have been assumed to lack a verbal root, with the possible exception of Gr. κήδομαι 'I am concerned for, I care for; I mourn'. However, a verbal root is readily available if we allow for an etymological connection with 1. **ḱeh₂d-* 'to fall'. A connection between **ḱeh₂d-* 'sorrow' with the root meaning 'to fall' is possible if the latter is reconstructed as **ḱeh₂d-* (either following Lubotsky 1981 or by assuming analogical regularization of the ablaut). Other scenarios are also possible. The two roots could be connected if we allow for the operation of *Schwebeablaut* between **ḱh₂ed-* (**ḱh₂d-*) 'to fall' and **ḱeh₂d-* (**ḱh₂d-*) 'sorrow; hatred'. It may even be possible to connect the two without positing a laryngeal in the root. There is some evidence for the existence of an acrostatic alternation between full grade and lengthened grade in the root of neuter *s*-stems (Stüber 2002: 204–207). Whether this ablaut is due to an inherent feature of the root (as a *Narten* root) or tied to the specific derivational type is not important at the moment. Positing nominal ablaut **ḱād-(e)s-/ *ḱad-(e)s-* would allow an effortless connection to the verbal root reconstructed by *LIV*² (318) as **ḱad-* 'to fall'.

Be that as it may, we may conclude that an etymological connection between 1. 'to fall' and 2. 'sorrow; hatred' is a distinct possibility and, if accepted, may be understood literally, rather than figuratively, as referring to cross-culturally common behaviours associated with the death of a relative or an important person in society.

5. PIE 1. **ḱeh₂d-* and **ḱeḭ(H)-* 'to fall'

The attested reflexes of 1. **ḱeh₂d-* 'to fall' present additional complications that may be relevant to the discussion. In Vedic the verbal root is part of a suppletive paradigm[14] in which the present tense is formed by an apparently unrelated root *śī-*[15] (PIE **ḱeḭ-* in *LIV*²: 321; **ḱeḭH-* also

[14] See also Hoffmann (1975: 92).

[15] For an overview and discussion of the attestations, see Kulikov (2012: 434).

possible) and the rest of the verbal paradigm and its derivatives are formed by *śad-* (PIE **ḱad-* in *LIV*²: 318).

	PIE *ḱei̯(H)-	**PIE *ḱeh₂d- (or *ḱh₂ed-, *ḱad-)**
Pres.	*śīyate*[16]	–
Perf.	–	*śaśāda*
Fut.	–	*śatsyati*
Vb. adj.	–	*śanná-*

One may notice the vague similarity between the two roots forming the suppletive paradigm, *śī-* and *śad-*. This naturally does not have to mean anything, since verbal suppletion does not require a specific phonological explanation. However, it might be worth considering whether this particular instance of suppletion is actually "weak", that is, that it has come about by a sound change distorting an originally non-suppletive paradigm.[17] The natural assumption in this case would be that the "elsewhere" root **ḱeh₂d-* is the original form and that **ḱei̯(H)-*, which is restricted to the present tense, came about through a sound change. It is important to note that, apart from the Celtic forms discussed below in Section 5.2, Ved. *śī-* does not have securely established cognates in other Indo-European branches.[18]

Descriptively, Ved. *śīyate* appears to continue a medial **i̯e/o*-present with zero grade in the root. If the original form of the root was indeed **ḱeh₂d-*, we would expect the present stem to have been PIE **ḱh₂d-i̯e/o-*.[19] I will now tentatively suggest that this **ḱh₂d-i̯e/o-* (or **ḱd-(h₁)i̯e/o-*) may actually be behind the attested Pres. *śīyate*. The mechanism that would allow this connection would be the development of **d* > **h₁*, a change that has been identified in a number of Proto-Indo-European formations. A particularly striking example of the sound change is

[16] Ved. *śīya-* occurs with both root stress and thematic stress.

[17] Such a connection is considered and rejected by Kulikov (2012: 435–436): "In the Indian tradition, the present *śī́ya-*[te] is treated as a derivative of the root *śad/śat* (Pāṇ. 7.3.78), together with caus. *śātáyati* 'makes fall', pf. *śaśāda, śeduḥ*; nominal derivative *śada-* 'falling', etc.). Although, historically, *śad/śat* and *śī* cannot be related […] they are alike in meaning and usage, co-occur in some passages […] and, synchronically, seem to belong together, as suppletive formations."

[18] *LIV*² (321) and Kulikov (2012: 442–443) consider the possibility that *śīyate* is derived from **ḱei̯-* 'to lie'.

[19] Alternatively, with a different reconstruction of the root, **ḱd-i̯e/o-* (or even **ḱd-h₁i̯e/o-* if we assume that it instead reflects a stative present).

provided by the heteroclitic noun *$\underset{\sim}{u}ed$-r/n- 'water', where the change of *d > *h_1 gave rise to a weak suppletive paradigm, NAsg. *$\underset{\sim}{u}e/oh_1$-$\underset{\circ}{r}$ (< *$\underset{\sim}{u}e/od$-$\underset{\circ}{r}$), Oblsg. *ud-(e)n, faithfully reflected in Ved. NAsg. *vār* (3x /vá.ar/), Oblsg. *ud(a)n-* (Lubotsky 2013, building on de Vaan 2008: 644). The exact conditioning for *d > *h_1 is difficult to pinpoint, however, so for now it can only be described as a sporadic change.[20]

If we apply the change *d > *h_1 to our hypothesized input form *$\hat{k}h_2d$-$\underset{\sim}{i}e$-,[21] we would expect it to yield PIE *$\hat{k}h_2h_1$-$\underset{\sim}{i}e$-. It is unclear what would happen to this *$\hat{k}h_2h_1$-$\underset{\sim}{i}e/o$-, since it is quite difficult to find precise parallels for the environment #*THH$\underset{\sim}{i}$V-*. However, if the Indic (and Iranian) present passive suffix *-ya-* is derived from PIE *-h_1-$\underset{\sim}{i}e/o$, as is often assumed,[22] forms such as Ved. pass. *dhīyate* 'is placed, is put' < "*$d^h h_1$-$h_1\underset{\sim}{i}$é/ó-" (from the root *$d^h eh_1$- 'to place, to put') would provide a precise phonological parallel. We could then conclude that the regular outcome of #*TH$h_1\underset{\sim}{i}$V-* was indeed Ved. *C$\bar{i}\underset{\sim}{i}$V-* and that *śīyate* was the regular outcome of *$\hat{k}h_2h_1$-$\underset{\sim}{i}$é/ó-. However, one can hardly exclude the possibility of the passives having analogical vocalism, an explanation that is not available for the synchronically isolated *śīyate*. Alternatively, one could assume a Sievers type vocalization *$\hat{k}h_2h_1$-$i\underset{\sim}{i}e$- after the heavy initial cluster, followed by laryngeal metathesis to *$\hat{k}h_2ih_1$-$\underset{\sim}{i}e$- to give the attested *śīyate*.

In spite of this uncertainty, I will *very* tentatively suggest that the verbal root *$\hat{k}eh_2d$- 'to fall' should be reconstructed as follows:

	Pre-PIE	**PIE**	**Ved.**
Pres.	*$\hat{k}h_2d$-$\underset{\sim}{i}$é-tor	> *$\hat{k}h_2h_1$-$\underset{\sim}{i}$é-tor	> *śīyate*
Perf.	–	*$\hat{k}e$-$\hat{k}$óh$_2$d-e	> *śaśāda*
Desid.	–	*$\hat{k}$éh$_2$d-s$\underset{\sim}{i}$e-ti	> *śatsyati*

[20] As noted by an anonymous peer reviewer, a reconstruction *$\hat{k}d$-$\underset{\sim}{i}e/o$- would possibly ultimately produce Skt. *ś-* (compare Skt. *hyaḥ* < *$\hat{g}^h d\underset{\sim}{i}es$?). This would bring us quite close to an alternative explanation for the suppletion in the Indic verbal paradigm. However, this would be incompatible with PCelt. *$ki\underset{\sim}{i}e/o$- (discussed in Section 5.1 below) and the change of *d > *h_1 would anyway predate such a development, thus removing the conditioning for the latter.

[21] If we instead reconstruct the root as *$\hat{k}ad$- (as does *LIV*: 318), the input form would be *$\hat{k}d$-$\underset{\sim}{i}e/o$- and the output would be *$\hat{k}h_1$-$\underset{\sim}{i}e/o$-. In this case the conditioning would be similar to the change seen in *$d\hat{k}\underset{\circ}{m}to$- > *$h_1\hat{k}\underset{\circ}{m}to$- (and its compounds) although the order of phonemes is reversed.

[22] Cf. the discussions in Harðarson (1998: 332–333) and Luraghi, Inglese & Kölligan (2021: 355–356).

In this way, we can explain the synchronic suppletive paradigm as having arisen from an older, regular paradigm of the type represented by the root **mer-* 'to disappear; to die' (*LIV*²: 439), i.e. Pres. **mr̥-i̯é-tor*, Aor. **mér-t*, Perf. **me-mór-e*. It should be noted that the Latin present stem seen in *cadō, cadere* will then have to be secondarily created, with **ĥh₂d-* (or its reflex **kad-*) introduced from zero-grade forms, such as the weak forms of the aorist and perfect and the past passive participle.

5.1. PCelt. **kii̯e/o-* 'to fall' and 'to weep'

If the Vedic suppletive Pres. *śīyate* 'falls' really is the result of a sound change from Pre-PIE **ĥh₂d-i̯e/o-* (or **ĥd-(h₁)i̯e/o-*), we would ideally want to find both the primary meaning 'to fall' and the secondary meaning 'to mourn' to be reflected in the present tense allomorph **ĥh₂h₁-i̯e/o-*, just like we do in the elsewhere allomorph **ĥeh₂d-*, as argued above in Section 4. It is possible that Celtic provides evidence for this. Schumacher (*KPV*: 404–410) has suggested that a cognate of Ved. *śīyate* is found in Celtic, in the verb **kii̯e/o-* 'to fall; to weep'.

If the reconstruction for Ved. *śīyate* proposed in this chapter, PIE **ĥh₂h₁-i̯e/o-*, is accepted, we ought to be able to derive PCelt. **kii̯e/o-* from this as well. For this to be the case, we could operate with a regular(?) loss of the laryngeals and subsequent development initial *Ti̯V-* to *Tii̯V-* in Celtic (cf. PIE **ĝʰi̯em-* > **gii̯emo-* 'winter' > MW *gayaf*, MBret. *gouaff*, HVann. *gouian*). Alternatively, we could assume a Sievers-like vocalization **ĥh₂h₁ii̯e/o-* after the heavy initial cluster.[23] In either case, it is likely that the laryngeals would ultimately be lost without a trace in Pre-Proto-Celtic, leading to the reconstructable Proto-Celtic **kii̯e/o-*.

In Brittonic this **kii̯e/o-* is reflected in a rare and apparently isolated Middle Welsh present *ciawr* 'falls' (secondarily inflected as an *ā*-stem), discussed in detail by Schumacher (*KPV*: 408–409). As such, the Welsh form only serves to ensure that the connection to *śīyate* is correct, by providing a perfect semantic match with Ved. *śīyate* 'falls'. The meaning of the much-better-attested Irish reflex is more interesting. Here we find a complete verb *ciid* 'weeps, cries'.[24] Schumacher (*KPV*: 406) argues that the meaning is due to a semantic shift within Celtic or in Pre-Proto-Celtic, which is indeed possible. However, if the scenario

[23] It is possible that we should expect laryngeal metathesis of this to **ĥiHi̯é/ó-*. This may then have been shortened by Dybo's Law to PCelt. **kii̯e/o-*.

[24] This is taken to be without a known etymology by e.g. Pedersen (*VKG* II: 487) and Lindeman (1984: 60 fn. 13).

proposed above, namely (1) that PIE *$\hat{k}eh_2d$- 'to fall' and 'to express grief' were one and the same root and (2) that the root *$\hat{k}e\underset{\frown}{i}(H)$- is simply the allomorph of this root in the present tense, we could equally well assume that the meaning 'to weep' attested in Old Irish *ciid* simply goes back to Proto-Indo-European and that both meanings, 'to fall down' and 'to express grief', were still present at the common pre-stage of Goidelic and Brittonic. It should, however, be noted that in the current scenario the complete verbal paradigm of Irish *ciid* would have to be due to a secondary development, possibly very old,[25] with new non-present forms being created from the present stem *$ki\underset{\frown}{i}e/o$- according to the productive patterns.[26]

5.2. PCelt. *$k\bar{a}d$- 'to fall'?

As was argued above in Section 5, the very existence of a Proto-Indo-European root *$\hat{k}e\underset{\frown}{i}(H)$- 'to fall' may be doubted. If Ved. *śīyate* and PCelt. *$ki\underset{\frown}{i}e/o$- are instead derived from *$\hat{k}eh_2d$- (or *$\hat{k}h_2ed$- or *$\hat{k}ad$-), we are left with PBrit *$ku\underset{\frown}{i}ð$- 'to fall' (W *cwyddo*, MCorn. *cothe*, Bret. *kouezhañ*) as the only evidence for the existence of the Proto-Indo-European verbal root *$\hat{k}e\underset{\frown}{i}(H)$- 'to fall'.[27] Usually PBrit. *$ku\underset{\frown}{i}ð$- 'to fall' is reconstructed as PCelt. *$ke\underset{\frown}{i}d$- (Schrijver 1995: 224), in turn derived from the root *$\hat{k}e\underset{\frown}{i}(H)$- 'to fall' by means of a *$d^{(h)}e/o$-present (thus *LIV*^{2}: 321; *KPV*: 404–406). A PCelt. *$ke\underset{\frown}{i}de/o$- would indeed regularly produce the attested Brittonic forms. However, given that the evidence for an independent root *$\hat{k}e\underset{\frown}{i}(H)$- 'to fall' is very limited, we may wonder if the Proto-Celtic reconstruction is accurate. Furthermore, the function of a Celtic *d*-present *$ke\underset{\frown}{i}de/o$- alongside the already reconstructed, synonymous Proto-Celtic present *$ki\underset{\frown}{i}e/o$- remains obscure. Indeed, the very existence of *d*-presents in Celtic is doubtful. Schumacher (*KPV*: 404–405, 569–570, 627–628) lists three instances of *d*-presents: PCelt.

[25] The fact that the Welsh cognate is only attested in the present is insignificant given the complete generalization of the present allomorph in Brittonic in almost all verbs.

[26] The structurally similar presents *$bu\underset{\frown}{i}$-$i\underset{\frown}{i}e/o$-, *gn-$i\underset{\frown}{i}e/o$- and *sl-$i\underset{\frown}{i}e/o$- are all secondary within Celtic and may not yet have been around to provide a suitable pattern when new non-present forms of *$ki\underset{\frown}{i}e/o$- were created.

[27] ON *hitta* 'hit' (*IEW*: 542; *LIV*: 321) seems too far removed, both semantically and formally, to be of much value. OIr. *cith* 'rain' < PCelt. *$kitu$- is semantically possible as a derivative of PCelt. *$ki\underset{\frown}{i}e/o$- 'to fall' (thus e.g. Irslinger 2002: 91), but this is by no means certain. Even if it is derived from this root, it could have been formed independently within Celtic, once a full verb was created on the basis of the present stem.

*keu̯ide/o- ‘to fall’ (PIE *ḱeu̯i(H)-) discussed here, *tāde/o-[28] ‘to melt, to thaw’ (PIE *teh₂(u̯)-) and *sende/o-[29] ‘to pour, to skim’ (PIE *sem(H)-).

Another explanation of PBrit. *kuu̯iδ- ‘to fall’ may be possible. If an inherited verb with a present *kiu̯e/o- and a non-present *kād-[30] were split into two independent verbs, we might expect a new present stem to be created for the non-present *kād-, just like new non-present stems were argued to have been created for *kiu̯e/o- in Goidelic. For primary verbs, the most likely productive present-forming formations will probably have been PCelt. *-e/o- and *-u̯e/o-, that is, *kād-e/o- or *kād-u̯e/o-.[31] The latter of these could conceivably be what is behind

[28] The Proto-Celtic reconstruction *tāde/o- is based on MW *toði*, MBret. *teuziff* ‘to melt, to thaw’. However, there is no evidence that this is a thematic present and it may well belong to a different verbal class. Indeed, it rather seems that roots of the structure *(C)CVH(u̯)- form their causatives as *Cā-dī- for expected *Cā(u̯)-ī- in Celtic. This allows us to understand a number of *ī*-verbs as causatives to roots of this strucutre: PIE *teh₂(u̯)- ‘to dissolve, to melt’ > PCelt. pres. *ti-na- (OIr. *tinaid* ‘to decompose’, with unexplained lack of lowering) → PCelt. caus. *tā-dī- ‘to melt, to thaw’ (MW *toði*, MBret. *teuziff*), PIE *gʷeh₂- ‘to go’ > PCelt. pres. *bā- (OIr. *baïd* ‘dies’, intrans.) → PCelt. caus. *bā-dī- ‘to cause to die’ (OIr. *bádaid* ‘to drown’ (trans.), MW *boði*, MBret. *beuziff* ‘to drown’; for the semantics, cf. Lat. *necāre* ‘to kill (usually without a weapon)’ > Fr. *noyer* ‘to drown’), PIE *kreh₁(u̯)- ‘to shake’ > PCelt. pres. *kri-ni/a- ‘to shake, to become weak’ (OIr. *ara-chrin* ‘perishes’, MW *crynu*, MBret. *crenaff* ‘to tremble, to shiver’) → PCelt. caus. *krā-dī- ‘to make tremble, to weaken’ (OIr. *crádaid* ‘persecutes, torments’), PIE *sneh₂- ‘to swim, to float’ > PCelt. pres. *snā- (OIr. *snaïd* ‘swims, voyages, floats’) → PCelt. caus. *snā-dī- ‘to make sail, to make traverse a body of water’ (OIr. *snádaid* ‘protects, convoys, gives safe conduct to’, MW *noði* ‘protects’). The origin of the hiatus-breaking allomorph *-dī- of the usual causative suffix *-ī- probably comes from a reanalysis of the present *dʰi/e-dʰeh₁- > PCelt. *dV-dī- and possibly verbal compounds with this root. The similarity to the Baltic causatives in *-dī- is striking, even though this is probably due to independent parallel developments based on inherited material. A similar development occurred in Indic, but here the hiatus-breaking consonant is *-p-*, as in e.g. *sthā- → caus. *sthāpáyati*.

[29] PCelt. *sende/o-(?) ‘to pour, to skim’ is only reflected in Brittonic, in e.g. MW *gwehynnu* ‘to drain, to pour out’ (compounded with *u̯o-) and MW *dihynnion* ‘skimmings’, ModBret. *dienn*, Vann. *dihenn* ‘cream’ (deverbative compound with *dī-; see Jørgensen 2024).

[30] This will have been the ablaut grade of the preterite *kād- (regularly dereduplicated in Brittonic) < PCelt. *ke-kād- < PIE Perf. *ḱe-ḱoh₂d- and the subjunctive *kāss- < PCelt. *kāt-s- < PIE desid. *ḱeh₂d-se/o- (cf. the reconstructed paradigms of PCelt. *klad-/*klād- ‘dig’, *mad-/*mād- ‘to break’ and *slad-/*slād- ‘to kill’ in *KPV*: 510–513, 464–465 and 583–587). Indirect evidence for the late survival of this type of preterite is provided by MW *llaðawð* ‘killed’ ← *llawð* < *lād- (dereduplicated) < PCelt. *se-lād- ← *se-slād- (*KPV*: 583–587).

[31] As remarked by an anonymous peer reviewer, we might have expected the creation of a new present on the basis of non-present forms in *kād- to have been *kad-u̯e/o-, on the pattern of e.g. non-pres. *slād-, pres. *slad-u̯e/o-, *mād-, pres. *mad-u̯e/o- etc. However, it is not certain that this ablaut pattern was still productive

PBrit. **kuiˍð*. We know that **-diˍ-*[32] was metathesized to **-iˍð-* fairly late[33] in the history of the Brittonic languages, as in PCelt. **mad-iˍe/o-* 'breaks' > PBrit. **maiˍð-* (Schrijver 1995: 317–319; *KPV*: 465). Accordingly, a **kād-iˍe/o-* is expected to yield **kɔ̄iˍð-* before the operation of the new quantity system in Brittonic.

The development of the rare Brittonic diphthong **ɔ̄iˍ* (possibly rather **ō̜iˍ*[34]) is not entirely clear. The only two relatively certain examples are in absolute word-final position, **mɔ̄iˍ* 'greater, more' < PCelt. **māiˍūs* and **ɔ̄iˍ* 'egg' < PCelt. **āu̯iˍo-*(?). In Welsh these have *wy* (W *mwy* and *wy*), completely compatible with a derivation of W *cwyddo* 'fall' from PBrit. **kɔ̄iˍð-* < **kād-iˍe/o-*. The Cornish and Breton outcomes of **ɔ̄iˍ* are more complicated and indicate that the diphthong had not yet merged with **uiˍ* < PCelt. **eiˍ* in Proto-Brittonic. Schrijver (2007: 312–313) assumes that **ɔ̄iˍ* was raised to **~~u~~iˍ* in Proto-Brittonic. This was then retracted to **uiˍ* in Welsh and eventually also to this in Cornish (but apparently it did not merge completely with **uiˍ* < **ē* < **eiˍ*). In Breton we find /yi/ in MBret. *muy* 'more' and *(v)uy* 'egg'. However, these examples may only be relevant for absolute final position (and in monosyllables). It is fully possible that **ɔ̄iˍ* developed differently in closed, non-final (i.e. unstressed) syllables (which would comprise most inflected verbal forms). Therefore, it would not be surprising if **kɔ̄iˍð-* (i.e. possibly **kō̜iˍð-*) yielded **kuiˍð-* when the vowel was shortened in pretonic closed syllables before the following *iˍ* (for the early shortening of **ɔ̄* in pretonic closed syllables, see Schrijver 1995: 213–215, 251–254). It is therefore at least possible that W *cwyddo*, MCorn. *cothe*, Bret. *kouezhañ* 'to fall' may be derived from **kād-iˍe/o-*.

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at this point in time, especially in light of the fact that verbal stem allomorphy is generally given up in Brittonic in favour of a single allomorph (the present stem).

[32] At the time of metathesis, the suffix will have alternated between **-i/iˍo-*. However, as demonstrated by **mad-i/iˍo-* > PBrit. **maiˍð-* and **ar-i/iˍo-* > PBrit. **arð-* 'to plough', the allomorph continuing **-iˍo-* was generalized in at least some cases.

[33] Later than the Brittonic monophthongization of PCelt. **aiˍ* > **ɛ̄*.

[34] It should be noted that the height of the vowel phoneme usually noted **ɔ̄* (or **ɔ* after the shift to the new quantity system) is not known. It is usually assumed that this was a relatively low vowel, mainly due to the fact that the primary source is PCelt. **ā* and Latin *ā*. However, at the time of the new quantity system it may well have been raised to a closed /o̜/ (as suggested to me by Martin Kümmel, pers. comm.). If this was the case, the diphthongization of stressed **ɔ* (i.e. rather **o̜*) to OW /au/ (MW *aw*, ModW *aw/o*) would be roughly parallel with the diphthongization of stressed **e̜* to OW /ei/ [æi] (MW *ei*, ModW *ai*).

6. Semantic parallels

Before accepting a connection between the two roots and, as a consequence, a semantic development from 'to fall down' to 'to fall down as part of mourning behaviour' to 'sorrow; hatred' we should preferably be able to point to examples where a similar semantic change took place.

A partial parallel is provided by the Akkadian verb *napalsuḫu*, which, apart from the primary meaning 'to fall, to throw oneself down', is also clearly used specifically for 'to fall down in mourning' (Gruber 1980: 465). In the Near Eastern context it is quite clear that this type of 'falling to the ground' is to be understood literally rather than figuratively, as it is often accompanied by covering oneself in dust and rolling around (cf. Olyan 2004: 29–31).

Taken at face value, OHG *trūrēn* 'to mourn; to be sad' (whence German *trauern* and *Trauer* 'sorrow; mourning') provides a more complete parallel. It is the stative derivative of the strong verb found in Goth. *driusan*, OEng. *dréosan*, OSax. *driosan* 'to fall down' and would as such be expected to mean 'to be falling down'. The Old English adjective *dréorig* 'sorrowful, sad', ModEng. *dreary* < PGerm. **dreu̯zaga-* 'falling(?)' appears to show the same semantic shift.[35] Accordingly, some of the reflexes of PGerm. **dreu̯s-* 'to fall down' appear to show a development similar to the one assumed here for **ĥeh₂d-*. However, the matter is complicated by the existence of OEng. *drūsian* 'to sink, to become slow, to droop', which might open up the possibility that the development was via 'to be lethargic' and 'to be depressed' ending with 'to mourn'.

7. Conclusion

In the preceding I have argued that **ĥeh₂d-* 'sorrow; hate' (alternatively **ĥād-*/**ĥad-*) should be seen as a derivative of the verbal root **ĥeh₂d-* 'to fall' (alternatively **ĥad-*). The semantic motivation is provided by the observation that 'falling to the ground' is a cross-culturally common reaction to the death of a relative. Furthermore, it was argued that the Vedic suppletive present *śīyate* 'falls' is in fact not suppletive in origin but the result of the sporadic change of **d* > **h₁*, allowing for a derivation from **ĥh₂h₁-i̯é/ó-* < **ĥh₂d-i̯é/ó-* (alternatively **ĥd-(h₁)i̯é/ó-*).

[35] Whereas the homophonous adjective *dréorig* 'bloody, gory' is a transparent derivative of the noun *dréor* 'blood, gore' < **dreu̯za-* 'dripping stuff' (cf. OSax. *drōr* '(flowing) blood', OHG *trōr*).

Finally, the Brittonic words for 'to fall', W *cwyddo*, Bret. *kouezhañ*, were tentatively derived from a newly formed present **kād-i̯e/o-* based on the non-present stem **kād-*.

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